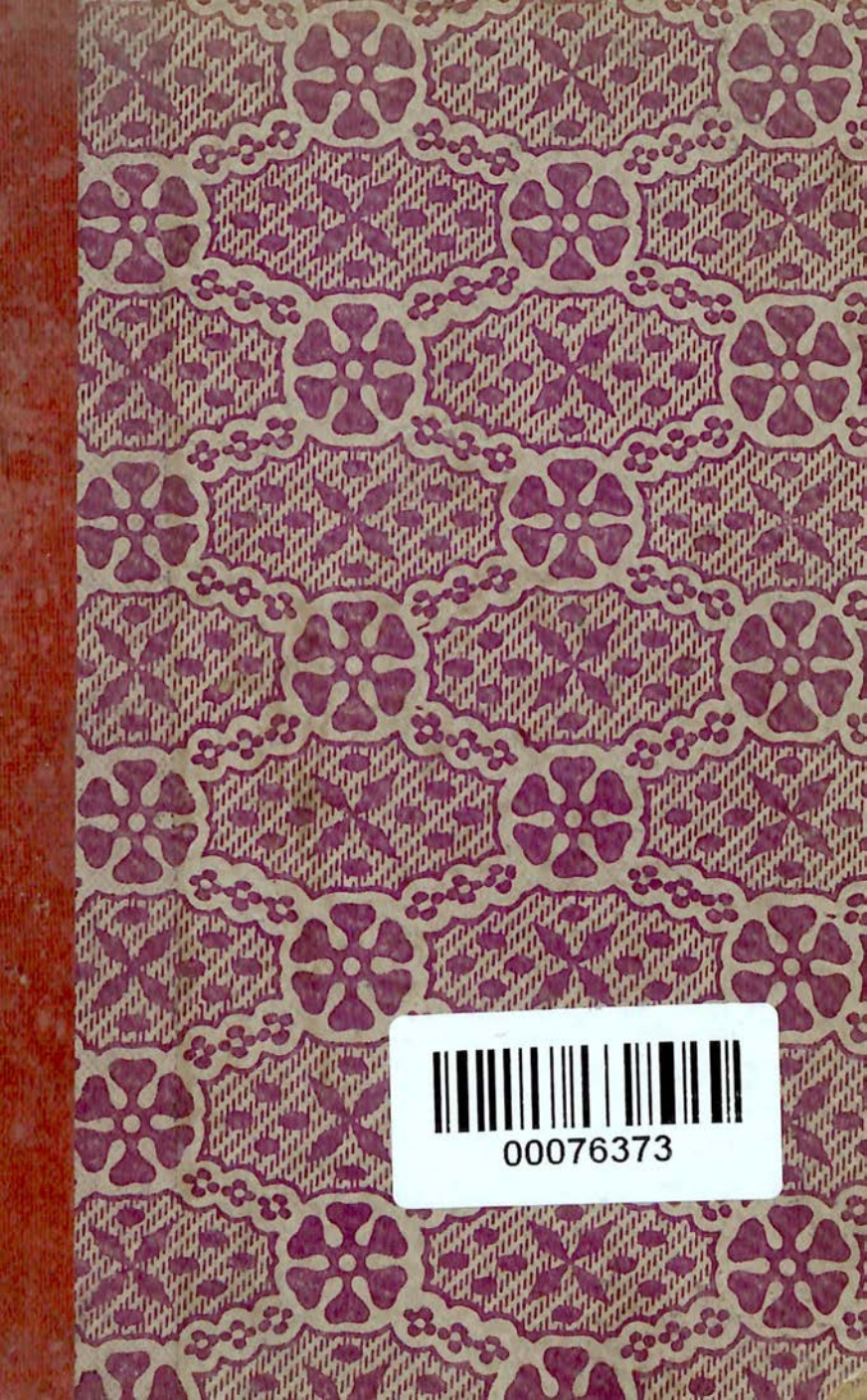
00076373

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

PRIMUS IN INDIS

A Romance.

BY

M. J. COLQUHOUN.

76373 a l

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

K x - C. 340

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, LIMITED.
1885.

(All rights reserved.)

WESTMINSTER :
PRINTED BY NICHOLS AND SONS,
25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

PRIMUS IN INDIS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE HALL FARM.

RAVENSTHORPE Hall, once a place of great importance in Gloucestershire, has been allowed to fall into decay, and is now used as a farmhouse. Knowing something of the strange family history of the people who had lived there long ago, I was impelled by curiosity to visit the spot.

Starting from Stow-on-the-Wold, I inquired my way, and after a walk of some miles I reached an avenue of ancient ash-trees, and I suddenly came upon an old decaying mansion.

The house had evidently been of great

consequence in its day. The part I first approached presented an unmistakeably uninhabited appearance. The grey stones were moss-grown, the mullions of the windows were crumbling in places, shutters or dirt-encrusted glass betokened abandonment by the owners, grass was growing between the steps of the great arched doorway—which evidently opened upon an extensive hall—a fine bay window was decorated with coats of arms, and I could obtain a glimpse through a smaller window of some dark oaken paneling.

In one wing of the house I now perceived signs of habitation. I had heard that an old farmer and his wife were installed in this part of it. An old woman approached me, and I asked if I might see the place, to which she very willingly consented.

With some trouble she opened the front door, and I entered. The entrance hall was

finely paneled with black oak, and the wide staircase had a balustrade of the same wood, most beautifully carved.

The old woman informed me that the property now belonged to a minor, and that the estate had been much impoverished by the last owner, also that the state-rooms of the house had remained uninhabited for many years; the old family had died out, and the present infant possessor belonged to a distant and collateral branch. The guardians of this minor were endeavouring to do their best for the property, but the antiquity and state of disrepair of the mansion prevented its letting, added to which there was its evil reputation of being haunted. Only the servants' quarter and kitchen had been made available for the present occupants, while the principal apartments, containing some of the old furniture and many pictures, were unoccupied, but placed under their care.

On one side of the hall was the dining-room, also paneled in dark oak and with a finely-carved chimney-piece reaching to the ceiling. On the other side, the drawing-room, a music-room and the library had originally formed a fine suite of rooms, but now presented a mouldering and ghostly aspect. They were somewhat scantily furnished in the Louis XIV. style, sundry articles having been removed; the chairs and stiff settees had dingy gold and white frames and faded embroidered coverings; some antique candelabra still hung on the walls.

The paintings were numerous, and of that kind found in old country-houses; some of the pictures were large dark landscapes, with inky trees, distant classical palaces, and temples pitched upon angular hills. There were some portraits painted on wood, of the Holbein period, of dames in ruffs and knights in armour. There were also some small

battle-pieces, representing a confusion of horses and men in deadly *mêlée*. There was also one hunting-scene, in which a curious breed of hounds were pursuing a still more exceptional specimen of a wild boar.

Amongst this collection of ancient art I presently found myself arrested by three pictures, portraits of the Georgian era; they were likenesses of a gentleman, a lady, and of a handsome youth. Who the painter was, or whether a critic would have pronounced them valuable as works of art, I cannot say, but they interested me exceedingly.

"That," said the old woman who accompanied me, as she pointed to the picture of the pleasing youth, "that was the last squire; some people say he was murdered, some that he was hanged, but sure it was he never returned to live at Ravensthorpe. And them two," continued the old woman, "were his father and mother. He," said she, pointing

to one of the pictures which had so much struck me—that of an elderly man in a red coat and white wig, "he was called the Wicked Squire, and well he deserved the name; he was that cruel to the poor, and folks do say he still walks. Not that I have ever seen him and I hope I never may."

The three likenesses were so real, so life-like, they kept me riveted to the spot. They looked as if these people had lived, loved, enjoyed, and sorrowed, like us poor ordinary mortals in this nineteenth century.

The Wicked Squire's head was surmounted by a long white wig with many curls, his wrists were surrounded with ruffles of rare point, the same lace composed his *jabot*. His coat was of red velvet. It was a singular hard and shrewd countenance that looked out from the canvas. He was a man who evidently had never had his faith shaken in the divine right of birth. He had lived

before the French Revolution had awakened in any one's soul a doubt as to the talismanic nature of good blood.

The lady was blue-eyed, and looked delicate and fragile. Her features were finely formed, and she was dressed in white. The youth's likeness was a full-length portrait. He was represented with an antique gun in his hands, and with two grotesque shooting-dogs fawning upon him. He had a handsome face, something resembling his mother's. His fair hair, unpowdered, hung upon his shoulders, while his complexion was as pink and white as a girl's, and the expression of the countenance was light-hearted and gay.

This represented Nevill Ravensthorpe at the age of sixteen; he was afterwards the first Lord Ravensthorpe.

I found in the records of a noble family that Nevill Ravensthorpe had written a

memoir of his singular and eventful existence. It is his life told by himself, but shortened and modernised, that I propose to give in these volumes.

CHAPTER I.

AN OLD AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Bath, January 1799.

MY DEAR GRANDSON, — When you arrive at man's estate you will hear from the foolish talk of neighbours and of others that your grandfather's life was not like that of other men. They may calumniate me, call in question my rectitude and my honour, and then, my dear child, I should wish you should know the truth. It has pleased divine Providence that I should play a great part in the rising and falling of a kingdom. It has pleased that higher power to bring me back to my own country in honour, in wealth, in prosperity, after many dangers, after many sorrows.

Who would have courage to tread the path of a life so strange, so eventful, as mine? Had I known at the outset the anxiety I should endure, the griefs and losses I should meet, the enmities I should create, the misconceptions I should encounter, the perpetual peril of my life in which I should live, the bitter disgrace that darkened all my early life,—I might have paused at the outset. Dear Grandson, may Heaven spare you a life as sad and lonely as mine has been, yet may Heaven give you that divine and unfailing love of a dear spouse and children, those noble friendships that I once possessed; the satisfied conscience, the knowledge that you helped your country at its need,—these are gifts of Heaven which I have enjoyed, for they have alleviated my darkest days.

As my enemies have destroyed all record of my birth, I now state that I was born on the 26th June, and christened at St.

Margaret's, Westminster, in 1729, and that my mother's name was Dorothea Mordaunt, of Hall, an ancient family of Northamptonshire.

My earliest recollections are of Hogben's farm, where I was put to nurse. I recal myself seated upon the red-tiled kitchen floor, while Joan Hogben, my foster-mother, dressed in a stuff gown, a straw hat with green ribbons, and Spanish leather shoes, received great pails of milk at the kitchen door.

I remember with pleasure the large family of my foster brothers and sisters, healthy, good-humoured children, who carried me with them into the busy hay-fields, or into the lanes full of foxgloves and primroses, which were close to the farm.

My first lessons in life were drawn from no books or stern schoolmaster, but from Nature herself, ever beautiful and young. The world to me was made, as God made it, a universe of blue skies, purple mountains, and green

trees. All the long summer days I spent in the meadows, full of high grass, or in the dim woods under tall pines or broad-spreading oaks, or I played by the brook, watching the minnows and trout hiding among the stones. Honest Farmer Hogben was a hard-working, thrifty man, and there was rude plenty, good humour, and happy content in that small upland homestead.

Still, although I lived with the Hogbens, and shared their simple life, from my earliest dawn of memory I knew I was "The little Squire." The respect with which I was treated soon imbued me with the doctrine of my own importance. I was dressed in a manner becoming my quality, my coat was of velvet, my stockings of silk, and my ruffles of fine lace.

When I was five years old I returned to my home of Ravensthorpe.

Once in three or four days or so, if he were

at home, I was presented to Squire Ravensthorpe, who I was instructed to reverence as my father, and I was permitted to kiss his hand. By some process—I know not how—by the chattering of serving-men and wenches, I became beyond measure proud of being "The Heir of Ravensthorpe," and I learnt also the less pleasing fact that my father was "The Wicked Squire," and that "the devil would come some day and carry him away."

When I first heard this from my mother's maid, Mrs. Honor, I was so young that I accepted the statement, and waited for the event to occur, knowing neither who the devil might be, nor why my father was wicked, or why he should be taken away; but when some years later I discovered that this ending of the Squire's career was improbable, by that time, like the rest of his household, I had learnt to hate him sufficiently bitterly to wish that such a supernatural

ending of his evil life were possible, as a warning to other men. But the powers of evil never disturbed him; like many other bad men, he lived to a green old age and prospered in all his wicked undertakings.

My mother had the remains of being a beautiful woman. Her features were fine and her figure was tall and slender, while her hands and feet were the smallest and most delicately formed I have ever seen. But she looked sickly and ill; it was thought she had the vapours and was in a declining way. She seldom smiled, and had contracted a gloominess of disposition hardly to be wondered at considering the solitude in which she lived and the harassing thoughts which oppressed her. To me she was the best and most tender of mothers, not given to many endearments but still just and kind.

Hapless lady! She was that most solitary of all human beings, a hated and neglected

wife. She was an intensely proud woman, and she never complained, not even opening her mind to me, and friends and neighbours she had none. I have heard, when she was a mere girl, and was first ill-used, (for the Squire when drunk thought not over-much of striking her), that she had complained to her brother Mr. Mordaunt of Hall, and that her relations had written her a homily on wifely submission, and told her they hoped she would bring no discredit on her kindred. She wrote to them no more and accepted her fate, not submissively at heart, for that was not her nature, but decorously and silently.

One night when I was thirteen years old I awoke to find my mother standing by my bed and weeping bitterly. This was the more surprising to me as she was habitually so calm and silent.

"Madam," I cried, feeling much terrified, "why do you weep?"

"I meant not to wake you, child," said she.

"Can I do nothing to comfort you, dearest lady?"

"No, Nevill, my son. I am forsaken even by Providence. You are all I have in the world, for you I live, for you I hope, and now they have injured even you."

"None are forsaken of Heaven, Madam," cried I, for both my tutor and my mother had taught me their own unfeigned piety and love of God.

"I am rebuked by thy pious thought, but that thou shouldst be ruined and disgraced, that is more than I can bear."

"Madam, what has happened?"

"I dare not tell thee, Nevill. I cannot bring my mind to believe it, or my tongue to utter so terrible a disgrace."

She regained her usual composure, and embraced me over and over again, and then left me.

I expected next morning to have seen my mother as miserable as before; but no. She sat presiding at her tea equipage, her hair was powdered, and she wore her Mechlin lace mob-cap. I could not believe she was the same heart-broken weeping woman. Moreover she answered me very sharply when I would have spoken to her about what she had said, and she never again referred to her visit.

If I awoke in the night for some time afterwards I feared to see her again, but she never appeared, and she never either by words or signs admitted she had come. I thought that she looked even more pale and careworn than of old, and often stood lost in thought with an anxious air, like a person waiting or watching for evil tidings. To me she was more than ever gentle and loving, but it was an affection mingled evidently with compassion.

My mother and I, and my excellent tutor

Parson Walton, lived so much apart from the Squire, that when we heard of his law-suits and other high-handed proceedings it seemed to be happening in some far place, like in the Grand Signor's dominions, and not near us, and after all the town of Gloucester was forty miles from us, and we never went there.

As I grew old enough, I was confided for several hours daily to the care of the chaplain, Parson Walton, who was the most learned and the most kind and simple-minded of men. He remained with us many years, and made a good classic scholar of me. He was my poor mother's only friend and consoler, though it was not in her nature to have made any one a confidant of her secret unhappiness, a misery which was open enough, but never spoken of by her.

My mother passed through the tedium of the many hours of her lonely life by doing needlework and by reading books. She was

skilled in the French and Italian tongues, and these she herself taught me. She read also the works of many new authors, such as the romances of Mr. Fielding, the elegant writings of Mr. Addison and Mr. Swift, and she was equally familiar with the works of Shakespeare, Milton, and Spencer; thus she, who was so cut off from all intercourse with living minds, lived in familiar companionship with the great thinkers of past time.

I have often heard my father say that my mother had "the very devil of a temper," and yet, luckless lady, she said nothing, but there was a quiet polite scorn in many of her words, a curl of her delicately formed lips, a fire in her blue eyes, which told the dissolute wretch to whom she was tied in life-long slavery that Dorothea Mordaunt might be injured but never subdued. The Squire, who feared neither man nor devil, absolutely feared her.

Squire Ravensthorpe never spoke to her except to swear at her occasionally; his days he spent out of doors in the hunting-field or in the law court at Gloucester. She was his housekeeper (although the very servants were divided into two factions, for "Madam" or "The Squire"), but having a capacity for business, and being careful of money (which the Squire loved inordinately), my mother managed the household. She first superintended the cooking of his honour's meals, and then carved the joints at table. My father shared his dinner with certain bottle-companions, a parson, an attorney or two, or now and then some of his tenant-farmers. Madam Ravensthorpe entered the dining-room with the first dish and went out on the opening of the first bottle, stopping only to drink "To the King over the Water." My father and his companions, after singing many songs and shouting and hurrahing, never left the

table until they were carried away "blind drunk" by the servants. The Squire always rose however before daylight to go fox-hunting, so that Madam Ravensthorpe had few opportunities of enjoying the Squire's society, had she any wish to do so, which I think was not the case.

Madam Ravensthorpe had never loved the Squire, so it was said; she had but a fortune of three thousand pounds, and, as my father's estate brought in four thousand a year, her family had insisted upon this marriage. It was true that my mother had a coach and four, in which she could have driven; but as the roads were all but impassable from ruts and holes, and there were no neighbours to visit, Madam rarely went abroad. Besides this, the Squire admired a lady in the market-town of Thornleigh, and my mother disliked meeting her rival, younger and more sprightly than herself, and rarely went abroad except

when for a short time every year she went to London.

The Squire accredited my mother with entertaining the most malevolent sentiments towards himself. He would tumble off his horse after a long day's riding and bawl to her from the hall-door, "Zounds! Madam, you will be pleased to hear that the scent was bad and we have had a blank day," or "You will be delighted that the hounds have got the distemper. There's good news for you, curse you. I have broken the back of Champion, the best horse I ever rode." At these sallies my mother would smile scornfully.

That Squire Ravensthorpe drank hard, and quarrelled with his lady, was too common a fact to have made him a bye-word in the county or cause him to be called "The Wicked Squire," but there was a churlishness and dishonesty about him peculiarly his own. He was fond of "taking the law" of every one.

He would prosecute an old woman or a child for picking up sticks in his woods, or his own farmers, should a cow stray upon any of his useless moorlands, where from time immemorial cattle had grazed.

But he showed great shrewdness in his lawsuits, and added much to his estates by first ruining two yeomen and then buying in their lands for next to nothing. He also inclosed several commons, which made the country-people hate him. But what caused him to be most dreaded was that he would never pay a just debt unless compelled to do so by legal proceedings. Wicked as he was, my mother might have conciliated him, and prevented much of the misery which befell us. Though a good and pious woman, she shut herself up in proud isolation, and was so created in mind that she could not unbend, but she was strong enough to live, die, and suffer alone.

CHAPTER II.

In "'45."

The autumn of the year "'45" must ever remain most vividly imprinted upon my memory. Horsemen came continually to Ravensthorpe. My father discoursed in the bay window of the hall with gentlemen who were strangers to me, and who wore bucket-topped riding-boots. Squire Ravensthorpe, little given to weigh his words or his oaths, swore so long and loudly against the present Establishment that my mother told him he would find himself in the Tower. "And

zounds," he would answer, "nothing in this world would give you so much pleasure. You would like to see me hanged, drawn, and quartered"; and then my mother, because his continual neglect—and worse—had soured her character, which was by nature of the sweetest, would reply:—"I think, Sir, you are little likely to be hanged, if ever you are, for a virtuous action!"

At night the yeomanry and farmers exercised and drilled in our park, and it was pretty openly said among the servants, "The Squire was going to march to the North." Words of mine can ill paint the fever of excitement we were in when we read in *The News Letter* and the *Evening Post* that Prince Charles Edward had landed in Scotland, and was rapidly marching into England itself.

One day my mother had asked me to hold her skein of wool while she unwound it. This

excited the Squire's anger. "Such a miss!" cried he; "such a molly-coddle you have made of that great lad—always tied to his mother's apron-string; but I will make a man of him. He shall mount the White Cockade and ride with me in my troop."

My mother ejaculated with great agitation:—

"He is but a child—but fifteen years old, Sir ——"

"Well, Madam, and what of that? I was but fifteen years old thirty years ago, when I rode in my Lord Derwentwater's following. You have made a mother's darling of him."

"He cannot go," said my mother; "of what use could a child be to them?"

I was not pleased with her argument and broke in:—

"I know broad-sword exercise as well as small-sword, and can hit a crown piece at ten paces, nearly every time, with a pistol; and,

mother, though never another sword were drawn, I will die for the King!"

"Zounds, Madam! There is some spirit in the lad, for all his missish look. He shall come along with me."

No more was said at the time.

Autumn passed, the leaves fell, my father and his troop still lingered, meeting in secluded parts of the park for their military exercise, yet making no move northward.

In November Carlisle was invested by Charles Edward, and in three days surrendered; the keys of the city were delivered to him by the mayor and aldermen upon their knees. The Prince left a small garrison in that city, and then pressed southwards, marching on foot at the head of his forces, dressed in Highland garb.

At Manchester the inhabitants received Charles Edward with illuminations and other public rejoicings. On the 4th December,

1745, he entered Derby and proclaimed his father king. In London there was a great panic, the merchants shut their shops, and, it is stated, the Elector of Hanover sent his valuables on board a ship in the Thames, preparing for flight.

At that time, undoubtedly, the gentlemen of England were in favour of the king by divine right; still they seemed to require guidance, and it must be owned that a timorous inaction, and a dastardly and ignominious spirit, seem to have paralysed all those whose words had been so brave in behalf of Prince Charles.

In the month of January my father and his troop at length rode off to the North. I was left behind, for my father, being in an ill humour, said he "would not be plagued with a tiresome brat of a boy." The Squire was accompanied by a few of the neighbouring gentry, and a little cavalcade of his tenants and servants.

They had barely left our parish when my father put the black cockade of Hanover into his hat. On arriving in the North he tendered his allegiance and his sword to the Duke of Cumberland! I despised his heartless conduct. It might, I reasoned, have been beyond his power to render assistance to the noble cause, but I could not forgive him for so basely abandoning the party to which he belonged. I felt rejoiced that I had not been a spectator of his dastardly act, and that he had left me at home.

After reaching Derby, Charles Edward met with nothing but ill fortune. He retired into Scotland. This retreat was followed by the well-known and bloody battle of Culloden. My mother and I were angry and indignant beyond measure at the disgraceful barbarities exercised by the Hanoverian soldiery in Scotland against the vanquished Royalists. As day after day, and week after week, we

read in *The Evening Post* all the details of the inhuman executions of Jacobites, in London and elsewhere, my blood tingled with indignation, and I vowed that when I grew to man's estate I would try and avenge these martyrs.

Notwithstanding his mean submission my father himself was suspected. He was removed from the Bench as a Justice of the Peace, and was told that he would not be received at Court if he appeared in London. It annoyed him to be no longer a magistrate, for that was a post in which, by his severity, he could terrify and injure the poorer sort; but he continued his amusements of fox-hunting and drinking, while he swore and cursed more than ever at my mother, myself, and all his servants.

At the age of seventeen, in the year 1747, I received my father's permission to enter at Oxford at Brazenose College. I went to that university with great delight, as I understood

that the Jacobite sentiment was powerful there.

Before starting, my mother had said to me that if at college I should come across one Gerard Ravensthorpe he was a cousin, and I was to show him what kindness I could. He was the son of a Bernard Ravensthorpe, a kinsman who had been ruined in the rising of 1715. My mother had caused this Gerard Ravensthorpe to be educated at Merchant Taylors' at her own expense, and there he had obtained a scholarship for Oxford.

At the university I spent two years, not without profit to myself, and there I met with much sympathetic Jacobitism and made many friends, but on this pleasant theme I may not dwell.

How distinctly I remember my first interview with Gerard Ravensthorpe, my kinsman, who was destined to influence my life—so much for evil.

He was under middle height, and distinctly crooked and hunch-backed, while his legs, in their grey worsted stockings, looked exceedingly thin. His features were not altogether ill-formed, but there was a hardness about the mouth, and a general hawk-like expression about the eyes and nose. Altogether I was by no means impressed in his favour, but I endeavoured to stifle what I thought to be unworthy feelings. His demeanour towards me was very subservient, and he talked well and fluently on subjects of scholarship. He soon disgusted me by uttering a panegyric on the reigning family; observing my silence, he inquired whether I sympathised with the King by Divine Right. I let him become acquainted with my sentiments and he then said:—

"Sir, you will deem me somewhat insincere, but I assure you my own sympathy is for the King over the Water; but as I belong to the foundation of a college, and am dependent

upon its emoluments, I have to be most careful and dare not say what I, and so many others at Oxford, really think."

I felt an utter contempt for his cowardice, and still I knew that, in his position, common prudence recommended silence.

At this time, three youths, students at Oxford, who had drunk the Prince's health, had been fined, and were to be imprisoned for two years, besides being sentenced to walk through the Courts of Westminster with a specification of their crime affixed to their foreheads.

I finished my Oxford career and returned to Ravensthorpe: my cousin Gerard, who was some years older than myself, accompanied me. But soon there was no love lost between my kinsman and myself. My mother and I would gladly have seen him depart, but he had rendered himself so useful to the Squire by assisting him in his law-suits, and en-

couraging him in any evil deed, that after he had been with us six weeks my mother said:

"Nevill, my son, this consummate hypocrite is established here for life. If one may regret performing a good action, I curse the day when I educated and nurtured this youth. His amiable demeanour conceals a multitude of faults, his suavity of manner a host of vices."

Gerard had gained extraordinary influence over the Squire's mind, and I may add at times over mine. How little the honest and ingenuous heart of youth can conceive or realize treachery and hypocrisy! How studiously Gerard flattered my vanity, how deferentially he listened to all my opinions, how anxiously he forwarded all my wishes! A born courtier! A man who so young had mastered the weaknesses of our race was certain to succeed; and I, poor youth, was rash and careless, and my stock-in-trade for

fighting the battle of life I had gained from my mother and my tutor. I had been taught to be truthful and trustful, and loyal to the unfortunate race of Stuarts. I may say, therefore, I was born to suffer those troubles which quickly I brought upon my head.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGER.

THE 23rd May 1751 was the most eventful day in my life, and the events which happened during those twenty-four hours are as clearly imprinted upon my mind, after the lapse of forty-five years, as if they had happened only yesterday.

My father had taken a house in Soho Square, and I was within one month of my coming of age. If my mother was to be believed, I was a very pretty fellow. She used to declare that in my blue and silver suit I was one of the handsomest gentlemen in the town. I had made no small figure as a man

of fashion. I had had a small-sword affair behind Montague House, and I had run my adversary through the sword-arm as I intended, nor had I failed to rush rather heavily into debt, but that caused me no anxiety. With my Oxford friends and my country neighbours I frequented all the routs, balls, and theatres, especially the charming gardens of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, and every day at two o'clock I was carried in my chair to the Cocoa Tree coffee-house, where I met the finest company.

I recal that the morning of the 23rd May was that of a bright spring day. The trees in Soho Square were just coming into leaf, while the brilliant sunshine lighted up even the gloomy houses of the town. That spring weather was typical of my life, for then I was a light-hearted youth without one sorrow, without one care.

That morning of the 23rd May, as I was

sipping my chocolate, my cousin Gerard Ravensthorpe (who was now the Squire's secretary) entered my room in a mysterious manner; carefully closing the door, he whispered in my ear—

"He is in London!"

"Who is in London?" cried I, and, thinking mostly of the Oxford Jew who had lent me two thousand pounds, "Is it Jacobs?"

"No, sir," he said, "'tis the Prince."

"What prince?" cried I.

"Why Prince Charles Edward," said he.

"Good God! If he is discovered he will be lost."

"Nay, sir; he will not be discovered! He passes as a French gentleman of fashion, and, owing to the perfection of his foreign accent, he can well carry out the part. He crossed from Calais in the ordinary packet-boat, and he relies upon the fact that few in the South of England have seen him."

My heart beat to suffocation: I was speechless from emotion.

"The Prince lodges in a house in Westminster," my cousin continued; "he has for companions a few ill-dressed Scotch and Irish gentlemen, especially one Law of Lauriston, an officer to the King of France. To judge from the Prince's following, Jacobitism is not a remunerative pursuit."

My cousin at this time professed Jacobite sentiments as profound as my own, and in my youth and inexperience I believed them to be as sincere.

"And who has told you this, cousin? Surely it is most rash of the Prince to venture into England in this manner."

"He is greatly changed in appearance in the six years which have elapsed since '45.' Rouge, patches, and an elaborately powdered wig have imparted a very different aspect to the handsome youth in Scotch attire, and

wearing his own hair, in which garb the Prince was always seen in that ill-fated expedition. Do not fear for him, his disguise is perfect, and he has come for a purpose of the greatest importance."

With what a thrill of intense pleasure I heard the news, what a tumult of wild enthusiasm and excited hopes it awoke in my breast. It was true that the citizens of London were satisfied to make money under the Elector of Hanover; but in the counties, especially in the West Country, there were many as devoted followers of the exiled family as I was myself.

Would I on that bright May morning have become an active partisan of the White Cockade had I foreseen the complicated web of misfortunes which threatened that cause and which threatened me? Man falls blindly asleep into his to-morrow; if he were a free agent he would not do this; he would know

his to-morrow and prepare for it; but, alas! we luckless mortals know not what a day may bring forth.

I was intoxicated with radiant dreams. I foresaw all the gentlemen of England drawing the sword from the scabbard for the King. I pictured in my mind the brilliant procession of lords and gentlemen assisting at his coronation in Westminster Abbey. Some wise mentor will answer me that in thus being betrayed by my imagination I was lacking in circumspection; but how few have cool, cautious heads at twenty, and how few at any age are wise enough to steer their bark of existence so as never to be shipwrecked by hidden rocks?

Be it as it may, guided by my guardian angel or my evil genius, I, Nevill Ravensthorpe, became the poor shuttlecock of Fate—I became but a poor straw drifted along the fierce tide of public events—I became the tool of heart-broken and desperate men, and I

joined them in attempting the impossible, and both I and they were driven hither and thither by forces too strong for us.

This narrative will show the life-struggle of a poor mortal soul on earth, buffeted by evil fortune, too weak to resist Destiny and yet too strong at heart to submit tamely to the inexorable.

"Should you wish to see the Prince, I can present you," said Gerard to me.

"You present me!" I cried. It seemed ridiculous assumption on the part of my ill-shaped and obscure kinsman to present me, the heir of the House of Ravensthorpe, to my lawful Sovereign and liege Prince, for if my education had failed to give me caution it had imbued me with a deep sense of my rank and birth.

"As you like, sir," he answered. "Should you know any one of more exalted rank, and more worthy to present you, I hope you will

forgive my presumption; but the Prince dare not let his presence be known to many. I am one of the few in his confidence. If you care to come I will this evening conduct you to his lodgings at Westminster."

"I will come," I answered.

I spent a day of feverish excitement; this day was to be the turning-point of my life. I now clearly see that my crafty kinsman, knowing my hot-headed, inconsiderate character, and my enthusiastic temperament, expected that I should bind myself to a hopeless cause, and that he hoped to reap advantage from my misfortunes.

The evening came. Dressed in plain dark clothes, my cousin being in his usual dress, a snuff-coloured suit, we called a hackney-coach and drove to Westminster.

Under the shadow of the great Abbey we dismissed our conveyance and proceeded to our destination on foot. We passed by Dean's

Yard, Great College Street, Tufton Street, and some other busy thoroughfares, and then reached a countrified road, where, near the river, stood a house in a walled garden.

We entered its gateway, and in its private grounds before the door an empty sedan-chair waited, while the chairmen, not in livery, loitered about.

I observed that the house appeared large, but seemed neglected and deserted; but I had barely time to look round the scene, the neighbourhood being new to me, when we were accosted by a tall man of military appearance in a scarlet and gold uniform of rather shabby splendour. He saluted us.

"This, sir," said Gerard introducing me, "is Mr Law of Lauriston, in the King of France's service, who will conduct you to the Prince. And this, sir," said he, addressing the stranger, "is 'The Heir of Ravensthorpe.'"

Mr. Law bowed low to me with great courtesy. I thought I had never seen a more noble countenance, or a man of more striking presence and carriage. This stranger, whose acquaintance I now made and who afterwards so much influenced my life, was not many years my senior. Mr. Law had an exceedingly handsome face, with finely-cut features, dark eyes of surprising keenness, and his long brown hair was tied back into a queue. Although he had a resolute face, still he had also a very light-hearted air. I was irresistibly attracted towards him.

"Mr. Nevill Ravensthorpe," he said, "I have been commissioned by his Royal Highness to say how much pleasure he anticipates in making your acquaintance, and how your family are known to him for many generations as being some of his most loyal and devoted servants."

By this time Mr. Law with a key had

opened the door of the gloomy house, and we entered a hall in which no porters or footmen waited. Its emptiness seemed to echo our voices and footsteps. He led me up an uncarpeted wooden stair, and, on the landing of the first floor, he said:—

"You will be so obliging as to wait in the Prince's antechamber until his Royal Highness is at leisure to see you, for I need hardly remind you of the many engagements and weighty matters that demand his hourly attention."

Mr. Law opened a door and ushered me into an empty room—empty do I say—yes, it was very empty of furniture: a few chairs, a settee, and a square table, on which burnt two wax candles in silver candlesticks, were all the adornments of the lofty and large room—but a figure stood motionless by a tall white marble fireplace, and that object will never be effaced from my memory until my dying day.

The figure standing by the fireplace was that of a slight and elegant lady, but when Mr. Law ushered me into the room and asked me to be seated, she never moved nor seemed to be aware of my entrance. The lady was rather above the middle height, and wore her brown locks without powder. Her hoop was comparatively small, and the short skirts then in vogue permitted a charming foot and ancle in a white stocking and pink silken shoe to be distinctly visible. Her arms were bare to the elbow, beautifully white and slender, and on her small hands sparkled diamond rings of great value and of the finest water, while on her wrists were great golden bracelets. I observed that her ruffles were of the finest old point. I noticed that her features were regular, that her eyelashes were long and dark; but she seemed lost in thought, and did not for one minute raise her eyes from the ground; a riding-hood partially covered her

head, and a long dark cloak in part concealed her magnificent dress of pink and silver brocade. I wondered much who this young and beautiful woman could be, and why she waited in the Prince's antechamber.

When Mr. Law re-entered the room her features became deeply animated and she addressed him in French, but in so low a tone that I did not hear what she said; however, with a quick movement of her slender white hands, the lady untied a green ribbon which bound together a vast number of documents seemingly of a legal character.

They then entered into a long private conversation. I fancied that I was the subject of their remarks. They mentioned many names strangely familiar since childhood to my ears: the manor-house of Buckland, which was but ten miles distant from Ravensthorpe—the hamlet of Buckland New Cross—the "Hare and Hounds" Inn—Sir John

Joddrell, one of my Gloucestershire neighbours —if such he could be called, as he lived twenty-five miles away.

I rather resented being a listener in matters that seemed to concern me, but which I could not distinctly hear nor clearly understand, as their conversation was carried on in French, so rapidly spoken that my uncultivated ear could not grasp the sense of the words.

"Sir," said the lady, turning suddenly towards me, "I am deeply gratified to find from Monsieur Law that a person of your position, talent, and spirit has entered our ranks. Believe me, that your reputation for honour, courage, and loyalty are not altogether unknown to us." Her voice was wonderfully musical and low, but it was the influence of her eyes and smile which enraptured me. It was true that her features were pretty, and sufficiently regular, but it was not until the forces of her eyes and smile beleaguered the

citadel of my heart that it fell captive. Her mouth had a wonderfully sweet expression, and her eyes were large and lustrous. I did not know the name, history, or even nationality of that lady; but so overpowered and bewitched was I by the glamour of her soft voice and wondrous eyes, that I would have gladly died to render her a service, and I would have followed her to the world's end.

"Sir," said Law of Lauriston, addressing me, and he seemed somewhat disturbed, "news has reached us of such great moment that I fear I must ask you, for to-day, to postpone your audience with the Prince."

I bowed, and rose to leave.

"Stay, sir," cried he. "If I read your character truly, you are anxious not only to join us but to serve our cause."

I answered gravely that my life and fortune were at the Prince's orders and disposal.

"This is the noble answer I expected from

you. You could render us a most valuable service should you consent to deliver, in person, these documents immediately to Captain Surcouff, of the brig Dontelle, sailing to-night to St. Malo. He is to be found across the river, at the sign of the Silver Flagon, at Lambeth: moreover, would you permit this gentlewoman to accompany you, or rather to be your guide. It is necessary she should herself see the captain. You will wonder at our choosing so fair an emissary; but in this affair, which needs the greatest discretion and secrecy, she is the only person whom we can at this minute rely upon."

I bowed, and professed my readiness to serve the Prince, and, I might have added, to serve this enchanting stranger.

She gathered together her documents with no ungraceful haste, drew her hood over her beautiful yet calm face, her long gloves on her bare arms, and wrapped her cloak over

her magnificent dress. Law led her down the staircase to the front door, kissed her hand, and she entered the chair I had before seen in waiting at the door.

The porters lifted their light load. I walked along by the side of the conveyance as her protector.

"Sir, when we reach Lambeth," said the sweet voice of the lady, "you will easily discern Captain Surcouff of the brig Dontelle. He is a short burly Frenchman, with rings in his ears."

As we neared the Thames, the lights streamed gaily from various taverns on the river-side, from which sailors and roisterers sang loudly; while some of the streets through which we passed were crowded with men and women of the lowest class. In truth I felt very nervous for my fair charge, who was loaded with priceless jewels, and not altogether at ease about myself. The press-gang had of

late been so hot in these poor and nautical neighbourhoods that I knew I myself might be seized, willingly or unwillingly, to serve his Hanoverian Majesty, only no press-gang, thought I, shall ever take me alive, and never will I wear the livery of the Elector.

We reached the river at length. It ran swift and dark before us. I engaged one of the many boats waiting to take us across to Lambeth. My mysterious guide stepped silently from her chair, seated herself in the stern, and we pushed off. It was a clear night, the stars shone brightly overhead, the lights of the houses on both banks were reflected in the waters of the running river.

On reaching the opposite shore our craft ran in among others then empty, moored before a flight of wooden steps. Standing on the river bank I could perceive a large many-gabled inn. Its sign flapped backwards and forwards with the rising winds, while the

candle-light streamed cheerfully from its open door and from the great bow window of its parlour.

"Sir," said the lady, "I will wait until you return. Should the French captain show any incredulity—for you are a stranger to him—present him this ring"

She drew one of hers from her slender finger and gave it to me.

"Find him and bring him to me, for I must speak privately with him."

I landed and entered the inn-door, from which the mingled fumes of hot punch and tobacco-pipes greeted me. In the cleanly-sanded parlour, seated at many tables, were a number of sailors, the most cut-throat set I have ever since seen. Upon asking for the French captain, a burly man in sailor dress rose, with a foreign oath, and reeled towards the door. On seeing the lady's signet-ring he seemed, although partially intoxicated, to

grasp all that was required of him, and followed me to the river side.

The sailor entered the boat with me, and we commenced again silently to recross the black river. I knew it must take the craft much longer to return, although the tide was with us; for, although we had embarked at Westminster, the lady in the boat had requested to be landed higher up the stream at the Gardens of Vauxhall.

I had as yet not exchanged a word in private with this singular gentlewoman. Although I was but a lad and country-bred, I flattered myself I could whisper a well-turned compliment into a lady's ear and make a gallant speech as became a man of fashion, but in the presence of this mysterious personage I felt for the first time in my life unnerved, and incapable of making a remark whether ordinary or extraordinary.

We landed; a running footman in a splendid

livery appeared to be waiting for our boat. When he observed the slender erect figure of this stately gentlewoman he assisted her to disembark, and conducted her quickly to a gilt coach drawn by six horses; but as she prepared to enter it the fair unknown addressed me,

"Sir, you have rendered me, and, still more, the cause, a great service; here we part, and are little likely to meet again. Accept my deepest and my most grateful thanks."

"Madam," I stammered, as I bowed and kissed the lady's hand, "the happiest hour of my life has been to-day when I have had the honour of serving you and I hope the Prince."

My enchantress entered the coach, the sailor seated himself alongside her, the three footmen hung on behind, and in one minute the heavy lumbersome equipage was out of sight, leaving me bewildered as one in a dream.

Around me were a crowd of link-men,

lackeys, hackney-coaches, and sedan chairs. I threw a guinea to the boatman, and thought that I had better enter into that gay haunt of pleasure, Vauxhall Gardens, so temptingly near, and so familiar to me, and from which the glad sound of music for dancing came; but then I reflected I could not present myself in so distinguished a company, and where I was well known, in an undress suit; therefore, very unwillingly, I was forced to call a hackney-coach and order the coachman to take me to Soho Square.

On reaching home Gerard presented himself in my apartment. I asked him to sup with me, for I was dying of curiosity to discover from him what ladies of rank were noted rebels, and he was equally anxious to hear how I had fared at my interview with an august personage. I only remembered, after he had asked me, that after all I had never seen the Prince.

This naturally awoke his curiosity; he plied me with many questions, but with these I fenced—love for the lady inspired me with caution. I could not have talked of her to any one, still less to my crafty cousin. After supper Gerard rose and laughed in the low sneering way peculiar to him.

"I see, sir," laughed he, "that one of two things has happened. You are so changed a man that either you are in love, or that you are guarding some royal secret. Who is the lady?"

I denied that there was any lady in the case, but when he had gone I paced up and down the room haunted by that slender erect figure, by those lustrous eyes, and that soft low voice. I marvelled at the singular position of one so young, and so beautiful, in being the tool of conspirators. When I thought of my enchantress, wandering almost unprotected in the lowest slums of the river-

side, I thought it unmanly of Law of Lauriestoun or even of the Prince to employ so divine a being on such dangerous errands.

I did not tell my mother of my visit to Westminster, nor about this lady. This was the first secret I had kept from her, that is, of things which were of moment. As far as the matter of the Prince, I was pledged to keep that affair private.

CHAPTER IV.

WAITING

For the next few weeks I wandered restlessly and disconsolately to every place of public amusement. I went to Ranelagh, to Vauxhall, to the theatres, to the Marylebone Gardens, to the walks in St. James's Park. I looked so intently into every nobleman's gilt coach drawn by six horses that the occupants must have thought me a most impudent fellow. But all in vain. I neither saw nor heard of the fair stranger I searched for with such unflagging zeal.

I reasoned that so fair a lady must at least

be a toast, and yet I never heard her spoken of. After vainly looking for her for many days, I concluded that in the noble but dangerous line of conduct she had adopted, she found it safer to avoid all places of public entertainment, and I despaired of ever seeing her again. The more so as, some informer having reported the Prince's presence in town, although, indeed, he had openly presented himself (so it was said) at a rout at my Lady Primrose's, it was thought too unsafe for him to remain; he had fled, and where he was hiding I knew not. This caused me much sorrow and indignation. I had not only lost my chance of being presented to him but also every hope of meeting the fair stranger again at the gloomy house in Westminster.

However I took boat and had myself again carried to the Silver Flagon at Lambeth, in the hopes of seeing the French captain, but heard there that he had sailed, and I found

the coffee-room parlour crowded with dirty noisy politicians, who, from what I gathered, held Whig opinions; so I cared not to stay, for fear of being angered and finding myself in some low brawl. Then I again visited the house in Westminster, but found the garden-gate locked, and no one answered my call at the bell. Still the place where I had met her had a strange attraction to me.

One day, while on the river-bank looking out on the noble river Thames crowded with boats and barges, I met Mr. Law, and right glad I was to see him. I fell into conversation with him, and at once—it was little in my nature to beat about the bush—I asked him the lady's name.

"Mr. Ravensthorpe," said he, in an almost sullen manner, "to tell you the truth, I care not to divulge her name and rank; let it suffice that she is the most virtuous and the most unfortunate of women."

"But is it impossible that I may meet her in London, sir?"

"Those who join our side are at present persecuted and outlawed, and common prudence obliges them to conceal their names and identity. This lady of all others has reason to avoid the notoriety her beauty and wealth might bring her, did she not live in the strictest retirement."

"Then I may never see her again?"

"That is what I would counsel, for I should be sorry to see you engaged in the pursuit of this gentlewoman, both for her sake and for yours; but, as you may hear of her in connection with the Prince's affairs, she is known among us only as the Lady Cynthia."

Law then told me Charles Edward was again in London, and that evening introduced me into the Prince's presence.

Charles Edward was seated at a table in a small room; with him were Sheridan, an Irish-

man, who had been his tutor, and Strickland, a priest. The Prince was richly dressed in olive-coloured velvet, and wore a fine brocaded waistcoat. His face was high-featured and singularly handsome, and his eyes dark-blue and full of fire, while his fair hair was unpowdered. His countenance often lighted up with the most winning smiles, although, while at rest, the cast of his features was melancholy. An air of sadness had become almost habitual to him, and I have heard that he felt so acutely the terrible events of the year '45, that if by misadventure they were recalled in his presence he fell into convulsions.

But at the time when I had the extreme honour of this interview, both His Highness and his followers were very buoyant and full of hopes of ultimate success. We all expected men, money, ships, and arms, from the King of France. When these reinforcements arrived they were to be landed in

Cornwall, and he fully expected the whole West Country would then rise and declare themselves in favour of the King by Divine Right.

Law of Lauriston had surprised me by showing me a paper containing the signatures of those men of mark in the kingdom who had secretly joined themselves to the Stuart cause.

Words can ill paint my overpowered feelings as I knelt and kissed Charles Edward's hand. When I reflected how much he had suffered, how cruelly he had been wronged by being deprived of the throne of his ancestors, and that his enemies, not satisfied with depriving him of his birthright, absolutely thirsted for his blood, and had put a sum of money upon his gracious head,—I was outraged by the wickedness and baseness of these times, and I was determined that every energy of my mind and soul, every drop of blood in

my veins, and my whole fortune, I would dedicate to the service of my King, and that I should from that day forth—God willing—live and die for him.

The Prince questioned me as to whether my father was to be persuaded to join him; I blushed with shame when I had to own that he had submitted to the Usurper and his faction. At this he looked serious. Law then questioned me as to whether arms, powder, and other munition of war, landed from France, could be safely concealed in our county, to be ready for use when time should serve, for how soon the time or occasion should arise we none of us knew.

On reflection I undertook to conceal these arms, which I could safely do, on my own land, when I came of age, without the knowledge or consent of my father, for I had inherited in Gloucestershire an estate from my uncle consisting of some upland farms

and a manor-house, far remote from any town, and calculated to lend itself as a place of security and concealment.

I promised also, when the rising took place, to bring with me my tenants and neighbours, and to assist the cause openly and secretly as much as in my power lay; I then added my name to a list of many other gentlemen and noblemen, and, as I signed the paper, my heart was full of joy and pride that it was in my power to join myself to so just and so righteous a cause.

Prince Charles Edward had the noblest presence and most royal carriage I have ever seen. He was very tall and remarkably graceful, but there was a charm in his manner and a fascination in his demeanour few could resist. At heart I had always been his adherent, but after seeing him I felt for him the most unbounded personal devotion, a loyalty which I still think was the duty of

every man of honour and of religion, especially when I reflect that he was God's anointed and had received the right to govern this nation from the Almighty himself. On leaving, the Prince presented me a likeness of himself, set in pearls, a gift which showed more the munificence of his disposition than the state of his fortunes.

When I left the royal presence my heart was hot within me at my father's conduct. It was very bitter to think that he was losing at cards the money with which he ought to have paid for troops for his sovereign. That he who should have raised the country was occupying his time in coquetting with some fair enchantress at a public breakfast at Ranelagh; and that instead of drilling soldiers and collecting arms, he was spending every night in the mock heroics of the play-house, or decked out in flowered satin, lace and periwig, with his feet in shoes too fine for walking, he

was being conveyed in a sedan-chair to dance like a puppet in a minuet. It were absurd indeed to expect high-minded energy or courage from him, and the saddest part of all was that, although few in his rank were so avaricious or base as he, there were hundreds as frivolous and unmanly.

I never saw the Prince in London again. He left and found a shelter and a warm welcome in the West of England among the loyal and chivalrous gentlemen of Devonshire, Somerset, and Wales.

CHAPTER V.

COMING OF AGE.

It is given to all men to be born and to die, and to some few that the world should make merry when they come of age. On the 26th of June, 1751, great rejoicings were made in our manor-house, and in our village, and in several neighbouring parishes, on the day I reached my majority, a very eventful day to me, but in a way the world little suspected.

From early dawn the bells of the parish church had rung out a merry peal; all our tenants had been feasted, an ox had been roasted whole, and at night bonfires were lit.

This day, I am sure, was one of the happiest in my mother's life—she was so overjoyed with pride and pleasure. She was determined that rich and poor should share in her great satisfaction.

My mother caused eight fat hogs to be killed, and dealt about her chines very liberally to her meaner neighbours; besides this, she sent a string of hog's-puddings and a pack of cards to every poor family in the village. She allowed a double quantity of malt to her small beer, and set it running for twelve days, and ordered it to be given to every one that called for it.

But what excited Madam Ravensthorpe beyond measure was that there was to be a ball at the Hall. The dancing was to take place in the great gallery in the left wing of the house, where it is recorded that on one occasion Queen Elizabeth had in old times danced with Leicester.

For this entertainment my mother had ordered a dress from London. It was of red and gold brocade, which she wore over a petticoat of red satin. I was to wear a suit of white and gold, which my mother was pleased to say was most becoming to me.

As my father was now a loyal subject, His Grace of Porchester, the Lord Lieutenant of the county, had graciously accepted our invitation. I was to open the ball by dancing a *minuet de la cour* with his daughter, the fifth and sole unmarried daughter of his Grace.

"This night, dearest son," said my mother, "thou mayest meet thy fate, for the Squire would marry thee to a wealthy and beautiful lady."

"An arrangement which, nevertheless, might be unpleasing to me, Madam."

"This marriage would build up thy fortunes, although"—here my mother hesitated—"her father is a Whig, an upstart, as we call

all new people; and besides, I believe, a Dissenter."

"Madam, is it possible that you can recommend such an alliance? You are jesting with me."

"For my part, you know, dear son, I deeply value the Church, but I am not of the opinion of certain fox-hunting squires, who think religion consists in hating Presbyterians and pulling down meeting-houses."

"A Whig family! What say you to that, Madam?"

"These new-moneyed people are all Whigs. They are all for King George and the present Establishment. I should be glad to see you married to a good fortune. Your position is so insecure," said the lady, with a sigh.

"My position insecure? You talk in riddles, Madam; but know that even to please you, the most incomparable of women, never as long as I live would I marry a lady who is

a Whig—a Dissenter—and who has neither birth nor breeding."

The guests arrived, and soon the room was filled; the music struck up, and I led out the Lady Betty to dance. This gentlewoman was tall and thin, and not in the first flush of her youth; her nose and chin displayed a tendency to meet; still she danced with much dignity and grace. I, for my part, was an expert and experienced dancer, but on that occasion I nearly brought eternal discredit upon myself by standing still, wholly unable to move. It was only by the greatest effort of self-control that I was able to perform my share in the dance. What had so disconcerted me was that I perceived a lady standing among our guests and talking affably and pleasantly to my cousin Gerard. There, indeed, stood my lady! That mysterious personage I had searched all over London ineffectually to find.

The Lady Cynthia stood there! Dressed in

the same pink and silver brocade, the same unpowdered hair, the same priceless jewels, the same white hose, and pink silk shoes.

When I had conducted the Lady Betty to her seat, and had bowed over her hand, I drew my cousin aside.

"Good God! Gerard," I cried. "Who is that lady?"

"What lady? my dear sir," laughed he; "I believe you have seen a ghost you are as white as ashes and are trembling in every limb."

"Tell me instantly, I will not be trifled with, sir," I cried. "Tell me who is that lady in the pink and silver brocaded dress?" I had my hand on my sword, and I felt that if he did not answer my question at once I should draw and run him through.

"Odds bodkins! are you mad? Will you kill me? Why surely she is only our pretty neighbour, Mistress Patty Orme."

"Who is she?" I inquired. "Are you sure that is her name? Are you for once speaking the truth, Gerard?"

"Do you wish to insult me?" said my cousin, an angry flush covering his usually white face; "used as I am to insolence as a poor dependant, still even I——"

"Forgive me, cousin; I meant no insult; but I have been told the lady has another name, and I am so puzzled and surprised that I hardly know what I say; I assure you I meant no offence."

On this Gerard recovered his temper, and gaily answered:—

"I perceive you are much struck with the lady, and, believe me, many other adoring swains have sighed in vain for the hand of the only daughter and rich heiress of Giles Orme. She made so much stir in the Pump-room at Bath that she was asked in marriage by a needy nobleman, several half-pay officers, a

London Alderman, and an old Turkey merchant of seventy who was monstrously wealthy; but the pretty damsel is not at all anxious to change her state. Mistress Patty wisely thinks that her admirers care more for her purse than her person, and she vows she will never give her hand unless her heart goes with it."

"Heavens! Only our new neighbour at Buckland New Cross," thought I.

Still how sweet was this part of the celebration of my coming of age. I had hated the necessity of making myself agreeable to a number of unsympathetic folk, and I had almost felt inclined to curse the hour in which I was born, when I was compelled to stand up and return thanks for the uproarious reception with which the toast of my health had been entertained. But now I felt the deepest interest in the whole proceedings. Here was this charming being associated with it, and

she was sufficient to convert purgatory into an ante-chamber of the joys of Heaven.

As host, I was in duty bound to ask the Lady Cynthia to dance. I walked through the minuet with her, and, as dependants were on all sides, applause greeted our performance. And, indeed, on her part there had been the sweetest grace. And I then took her hand and conducted her to her seat; I would full fain have talked to her.

"Sir," said the Lady Cynthia, in a voice trembling with emotion, "though I greatly fear matters must arise to create unkindly feeling between us, I beg of you to allow me an opportunity to commune with you in private. Danger threatens one we both serve —the Prince," she whispered.

As she uttered these words to me, Gerard Ravensthorpe approached, and in most courteous fashion, craved the honour of dancing a minuet with her. It seemed to me that she

glanced at his misshapen figure, and that she was disposed to refuse; on second thoughts she recognised the cruelty of rejecting him on that account and she consented.

Considering his physical disadvantages my cousin achieved a minuet remarkably well. He at length led her to a place by the side of her father with an air of triumph, and from his general demeanour I surmised that I was not the only one who had experienced the glamour of those eyes, though the idea of my cousin putting himself in competition to me seemed preposterous.

I presently took the Lady Cynthia as my partner in a country dance, and rejoiced in her graceful movements as she stood opposite me, and in the touch of her hand when we met. She seemed to know the power of her eyes, and seemed to be sparing in the exercise thereof, as she kept them almost constantly curtained by her long eyelashes. But when

I did get a view of them, they were at one glimpse soft in their dreamy glance, and at another minute they were marvellously glittering in amusement at the comical aspect presented by two fat neighbours, who were bobbing, capering, and jigging, in the dance.

Subsequently I had in courtesy to dance with another lady, and saw that Gerard Ravensthorpe had secured Mistress Orme's hand. To my delight, however, I once caught her eyes resting on me, when she immediately averted their gaze, with a slight suffusion of colour to her face.

To my rage and despair I found I had to conduct the Lady Betty into supper, and my cousin escorted my enchantress. Fortunately for my character as a man of courtesy I found the Lady Betty very loquacious.

I became deeply interested; her ladyship told me much local news of which up to that time I had been disgracefully ignorant,

namely, that an heir had been born to Sir Thomas Dandridge. That honest John Pilton had broken his neck foxhunting. That her sister Lady Belinda Danver's coach had been stopped near Evesham by highwaymen. That while Squire Jones and Miss Lettice Pelham had been joined in holy matrimony at the parish church, some of our neighbours had absolutely started for Gretna Green; and that Tom Hampton, one of our oldest families in the county, had been married to Heaven knows whom, by the chaplain of the Fleet.

"But, sir," said the singularly loud voice of my companion, "have you yet seen that monstrously fine house, built by this new upstart, Mr. Giles Orme? 'Tis at Buckland New Cross."

I answered her ladyship that I had not seen it and had only heard vague rumours about it.

"You ought to see it, indeed, Sir. It is

passing strange that a man no better than a tradesman should come to our county and ape the nobility, nay, ape even royalty itself. This new house at Buckland New Cross has been erected upon the model of an Italian palace. It is built of cut stone and contains seventy bedrooms, while the suites of reception-rooms are of dimensions quite amazing; they are twenty-five feet high if they are an inch. The ceilings and doors are painted and gilded by Frenchmen and Italians this London cit has himself brought from foreign parts, while the furniture of this palace is to come from Paris itself. This we country-folks know to our cost; about us the roads are impassable from the ruts and holes caused by those heavy-laden waggons, taking things to Buckland New Cross. If you could only see the horses tugging at those heavy drays, why, sir! you would think they drew loads of iron."

"But Mistress Patty Orme," I ventured cautiously to remark, "is a young and beautiful lady."

"She is considered pretty," said Lady Betty, determined herself not to give an opinion. "She seems a most singular person; she rides, but where she goes I never could discover; and her dress, oh! my dear sir, 'tis ludicrous. She wears a blue coat trimmed with silver, like a man, and a man's hat, her hair is curled and powdered, and she looks a very pretty fellow. I admit that she wears a petticoat, and that sometimes she is attended by two serving-men, still she is as often to be seen riding alone. I have seen her horse, a fine bay thoroughbred, dart past my coach, and my heart has jumped into my mouth, for I felt persuaded that we were beset by highwaymen." Soon after I conducted Lady Betty to her seat, bowed, and left her.

It was a beautiful moonlight night in

June, many of the guests had strolled out upon the terrace; I mustered courage to ask the Lady Cynthia if it would please her to join them; she consented. I was intensely anxious to hear what news she had to tell me, and I hoped to be now able to speak privately with her.

Again the fiddles and hautboys struck up a concluding country dance, but we only heard the lively strains in the distance. We had strolled out of the door which opened on the terrace and were standing in the full moonlight. Behind was the grey old hall with its mullioned windows all clearly to be seen by the pale moonbeams. Below us lay the terrace garden, the stiffly cut yew-trees throwing their vivid shadows on the narrow gravel-paths of the garden. Beyond lay the park and its tree-clumps. But beautiful as these scenes, familiar to me from childhood, were, I had never before viewed them with

the extraordinary tumult of feeling with which I now looked out upon them.

Lady Cynthia in her costume of pale pink had a fairy-like aspect, and the diamond stars in her hair sparkled fitfully, but we made our way to a summer-house, standing in a grove of trees at no great distance from the manor. I felt my companion's arm trembling within mine, and she leaned heavily upon me for support as if she could barely walk; I feared she would swoon.

"Madam, shall we return to the house; I fear you are ill;" for I felt seriously alarmed at the state of extreme agitation the beautiful being on my arm seemed to be in, as she trembled in every limb.

"Sir, excuse the miserable state of bodily weakness I am in; I have had to wear a mask and seem unconcerned for so many hours, while the most deadly fear, the most heart-breaking anxiety for one we both serve and

obey, has nearly overturned my reason; I am as one distraught, first one terror seizes me and then another. I know not which should be first, for the Prince is to-night in a position of extreme peril, and that through my ill-advising."

"Good God, madam! Can nothing be done?"

"Such cold-hearted treason! Such baseness, 'tis incredible! Traitor! Recreant!"

"Of whom do you speak, madam?" I asked.

"Of Sir John Joddrell. Who would have thought that that fat good-natured-looking man, who capered so gaily at your ball this night, were so base a villain!"

"Has he betrayed us?" I knew from the paper the Prince had shown me that Sir John Joddrell was one of the wealthiest, warmest, and most influential Jacobites in our county. "If he has, by Heaven he shall give me the satisfaction of a gentleman!"

"Perhaps it is not quite so bad as that; but I fear not only what he has done but what he may do. 'Tis of great moment the Prince should revisit London shortly; you know he has been right royally entertained by the gentlemen of the West Country, although he travels incognito. On his way to town he was to lie at Middleton Hall, Sir John Joddrell's seat. Monday next Sir John was to have horsed the party of four riders, and made arrangements for their further journey; and now, at the last minute—the craven heart—he has sent to let me know that he will not receive them or horse them. He says the journey to London is too perilous! That all is discovered! That the Prince shall not enter Middleton Hall; nor can he assist the party in any way. He has abandoned them basely!"

"As I live he shall give me satisfaction," cried I, indignantly.

"Nor is this all; happy the ill news which

comes singly. Barely had I received this blow, when quickly rides to our house a messenger from Squire Throgmorton the papist, and this just before I came to this scene of gaiety, which I have had little heart to enjoy. The Prince, says the papist, must change his road and disguise, for some one has informed against him. A lieutenant and two companies of musketeers have been marched into Evesham. The Prince slept at Worcester last night, and to-night sleeps at "The White Harte" in the High Street of that town. These soldiers can only have been sent for his arrest! The Prince should be informed of Joddrell's treason—to put it out of that wicked squire's power to inform against him. Good God! to think that even at this minute they may be taking him to London guarded by Hanoverian muskets!"

"Nay, madam. We are not the only friends he has in the county. We will still hope."

"Yes, but he has many bitter enemies. This Squire Joddrell has turned traitor to gain favour with His Grace of Porchester, for he would wed the Lady Betty. Something must be done, and that quickly!"

"Madam; the town of Evesham is but thirty miles from this; a messenger could let the Prince know and send him to a place of safety."

"But ah, dear sir! if you knew as well as I do what a world of cold hearts and selfish wretches we live among! Who is now to be trusted? Like sheep they will follow suit, when Squire Joddrell's desertion is known. Where can the Prince lodge with safety? Who, except you and I, are truly loyal. Placemen and time-servers all! Look, sir, whom would you trust?"

She placed a long list of names in my hands. I felt perplexed. There was Gaynor of Gaynor Castle, but he had lately been to court at St. James's; Freemantle of Thorne House,

loyal enough when sober, but so continually drunk that it would be madness to trust him with a secret; Mordaunt of Ebers Hall, honest enough, but under the thumb of a Whig wife.

"What say you, madam, to Throgmorton the papist?"

"Yes, we can safely trust him, but how is the Prince to be warned at Evesham—this very night?"

"Madam—Cynthia—if a man and horse are wanted, I will go. 'Tis but thirty miles to Evesham, I know every inch of the road, and I have as good a hunter as any man in England. I will ride to warn the Prince."

"I would, ere this, have more than once asked your advice and assistance, but I am afraid, and others too are afraid, of your kinsman and tutor, Gerard Ravensthorpe. They have reason to think he is an informer by trade."

"Madam, if this is true, I will pick a quarrel with him and run him through."

"The Ministry know that you have thrice visited the Prince at Westminster, and the days on which you went; now no one could have known this except Gerard Ravensthorpe.".

"He is the very devil incarnate!" cried I. "What a return for my mother's years of kindness, and the hospitality he has received at Ravensthorpe! By Heaven! madam, and as I hope to be saved, he shall live no more at my house, and he too shall give me satisfaction."

"Do nothing rash; we have no proof that he has done so vile an action. Sir I act I know, too much on impulse, and am carried away by every strong emotion of my heart; but I look to you for guidance, for that prudence and judgment to which I am, alas, too much a stranger."

"Dearest lady," cried I, falling on my knees, and kissing her hand. "I live only to serve my God, my King, and you."

"Sir, the homage of a noble and generous heart like yours is priceless. I am confused and terrified, I fear danger for the Prince, I fear too for you, and for others I love more than life. Providence has sent you to me in my distress. I will be guided wholly by your advice."

The lady after a little while grew calmer, after thinking over every plan, and discussing every means to best serve the Prince; in which the Lady Cynthia showed much wit, although her judgment was less marked in what she said than was her affectionate nature and high-souled loyalty.

It was arranged that I should ride over to Evesham by cross-roads that night, and carefully avoid letting Gerard or my father surmise where I was going. I also undertook

to deliver a purse containing five hundred pieces of gold to the Prince. That, if he were to be persuaded to go, I should make Charles Edward over to the charge of the papist Throgmorton. That the Lady Cynthia would herself inform Throgmorton to meet the Prince and me at the large white cross which marks the meeting of the four roads at Hinton. That, should Throgmorton fail to appear, I must bring Prince Charles Edward to Mr. Orme's house of Buckland Manor, although sending him to another county with Throgmorton would more ensure his safety. The Lady Cynthia gave me many minute directions concerning the safety of the Prince, and then remarked with the charming grace never absent in all she said and did,

"Pardon me, sir, forgive the over-anxiety of a devoted heart, for I know that you have but to be shown the road of duty, and that

you will follow it, and that with greater prudence and wisdom than I can display. You will know, far better than I can tell you, how to act."

I bade her farewell, I kissed her hand, when she called me back.

"Mr. Ravensthorpe, let me warn you. I feel intuitively—I know not how—that in this Gerard Ravensthorpe you have a most dangerous enemy. He is silent, cunning, far-seeing, and to us and to you the most dangerous person in Gloucestershire. Perhaps it is that for years I have lived in the constant fear of danger to those I love, and thus the natural powers of my soul are more awakened than in most women, but I have, alas! the fatal gift of reading the real characters of those people I am brought into contact with. I may well call it fatal, for in this world, if you can see enough into people's hearts, and can read what they really are and not what they appear, how

few are there left to love, how few to trust? My dear sir, do not madly pick a quarrel with your cousin, but meet craft with craft, guile with guile. May God guard you"—her eyes were full of tears—"I foresee that some great trouble or danger threatens you."

"Dearest lady, my utmost gratitude for your warning; I can protect myself. I shall visit blackhearted treachery with the just punishment it deserves."

CHAPTER VI.

A RIDE BY NIGHT.

SHORTLY after I rode away from the stable-yard, taking a valise upon my horse, and after passing through the park I dismissed my servant, telling him to drink my health at the village inn. I was then alone and had no reason to believe I had been observed.

The first few miles of my solitary ride lay through Warne Forest, which belongs to us. It chanced to be a fine moonlight night, and I had time to admire the great outstretched branches of the ancient oaks, and the tall dark figures of the firs; the thick underwood, and

the total stillness of the great woods, broken only by the harsh note of a night-jar, or sometimes by the deer, startled by the unaccustomed sound of a horse's tread, breaking in upon the stillness of the night. At length I came to more open country, and, as I trotted down a lane with high hedges on either side, I reflected that I was some ten miles from home, at Morton, and on the highway to Evesham, without having met a single human being, and considered myself safe from pursuit.

The dawn was breaking when I drew up at the "Hare and Hounds" inn, where I was well known. I told the ostler that my groom's horse had fallen lame, and that I was posting up to London to be in time for a cock-fight. He accepted my explanation seemingly without suspicion. He told me with regret that he could only give me a sorry nag, and I therefore got over the next ten miles exceedingly slowly. At the "Half-way House" at

Hinton however I was given an old hunter warranted to go swiftly. This was in truth the case, for I never drew rein for ten miles, in fact my steed all but ran away with me. I arrived at Evesham in consequence very much out of breath and covered in mud, and found the streets crowded, as it was market-day.

So far I had succeeded in carrying out Mistress Cynthia's errand. I was in Evesham. I rode up boldly to "The White Harte" inn in the High Street. My great object now was to discover whether the Prince and his friends had arrived. I knew it was wiser to make no particular inquiries, but to wait and see if I should chance to find them. A groom led away my horse, another servant carried away my valise to the house, a third attendant conducted me inside, a fourth asked me whether I would join the host's table, or whether I would sit by myself. I said I would go to the public room.

I entered the kitchen and saw by the fire a small table, at which I observed that four gentleman looking very travel-stained were seated. I recognised at once the noble presence and lofty figure of the Prince, and also Mr. Law of Laurieston; the other two were unknown to me. I perceived, also, that they recognised me, but I thought it was better to order my breakfast and not discover myself to them, as, being market-day, many people were coming and going.

Breakfast being over I met Mr. Law at the foot of the stairs, and let him know I must confer privately with the Prince. He therefore led me to his bedchamber, when, having deeply regretted being the bearer of such evil tidings, I told them my business; but I never shall forget the light gay way the noble-minded young Prince received my ill news.

"Joddrell's turned traitor! Ah! Lloyd. Ah! Law. This is indeed a disappointment.

We have lived in village inns on bacon and coleworts, and drank small beer, and Law and Lloyd were for ever talking of the venison, the tarts and syllabubs, the fine cook, and the old wine, at Squire Joddrell's! and now he has turned traitor."

The Prince and his friends laughed so gaily at their miscalculations that I could not help joining in their strange hilarity.

Then I told them that the Lady Cynthia was of opinion that the Prince must entrust himself entirely to Miles Throgmorton for safety.

"Has he a good cellar and a good cook?" asked the Prince.

I had to own that I knew little about him, except from common report. He was a rigid Papist and observed the fasts of the Church; but he kept a priest in his household and in his manor-house, and he had therefore a most admirably contrived secret room, in which a fugitive could hide.

"As to fasting," cried the Prince, "we are soldiers, and have a dispensation from the Pope; and as to a secret room, that is still less to my mind. Let us push on to London."

But I explained that we feared the Prince had been betrayed by some informer. That soldiers had been sent to Evesham itself. At this the Prince grew more serious, and swore many oaths in French and Italian.

The little party however were greatly cheered by the sight of the purse of gold which Mistress Cynthia had sent. They were much in want of money, and five hundred pounds was a noble gift.

"That lady," said the Prince, "is the best man in England. If I had but one regiment of such indomitable souls I would not only recover the crown of my ancestors but conquer the whole world!"

It was hastily arranged, the better to escape detection, that they should separate, never, as

it afterwards proved, to meet again. Law was to go to France, Macdonald to Spain, O'Malley the priest to Ireland, and Lloyd the Welsh squire to return to his own country. They recognised the danger was imminent; a few hasty farewells were spoken without much seeming agitation, and the heir of the Stuarts was left to my protection.

Macdonald first started in a post-chaise. Lloyd then left by coach. The Prince, Law, and I, mounted our horses, after I had hastily paid the reckoning of the whole party.

When we had made our way through the crowded market-place we rode as hard as we could for the first five miles without drawing rein, and then the Prince pulled up his horse alongside mine.

It was a glorious day, the wild roses in the hedges, and the honeysuckle all in bloom, scented the air; while in the woods the trees were one mass of leaves; the birds singing

gaily, and the long grass of the fields was golden with buttercups. These things since childhood always gave me pleasure; but the Prince, who was fallen into a deep dejection at the loss of his friends, seemed hardly to observe the country through which he rode.

I was again completely under the spell of his gracious nature, and greatly pitied his undeserved misfortunes. Charles Edward added to a very handsome person a polished and courteous manner. He seemed to me to have the courage to plan a great undertaking, and the still rarer courage of endurance, which accepted without a murmur the failure of his brightest hopes. In conversation he owned to me that he was weary of this hide-and-seek life. The time was unpropitious, and, in England, few were loyal to him; for the present he said he would return to Italy, but he would come again, landing in the West, supported by foreign troops, and that he

hoped this return would be before long, I rode on with him until we came to the great sign-post at the cross-road near Hinton, and there we perceived a grave elderly gentleman on horseback. He was dressed in a red coat and laced hat. He saluted us, and I recognised in him Mr. Throgmorton. I had done my part in securing the safety of the Prince; but I failed not to remark that the Lady Cynthia had equally carried out her share in the scheme.

Throgmorton, however, warned us that whoever had been the traitor was well-informed, and knew the secrets of our party. That his house was not safe; that a party with a search warrant had already visited his abode. He therefore recommended that Buckland Manor should be our destination.

We heard afterwards we had by no means been too prompt at Evesham. About two hours after we had left the inn, a sheriff's

officer, accompanied by some soldiers, had arrived at "The White Harte." The landlord was not minded to give any information, and, the inn having been very crowded, it did not appear clear that the people they sought had been at that house, and therefore no further steps were taken.

We pressed on, and towards the afternoon dismounted under the portico of the great house at Buckland New Cross.

Mistress Orme stood at the hall door to receive us. I observed that she had placed white bows on her dress, at her breast, and at her elbow-sleeves; while a white ribbon adorned her hair.

I was more than repaid by the glance of joy and happiness in her beautiful countenance on perceiving that the Prince was safe. She received Charles Edward with a heightened colour and evident confusion as he bowed low in return to her deep curtsey.

But the familiarity of Mr. Law to this beautiful being both shocked and surprised me; he leant forward and kissed her white forehead with all the ease and carelessness of a husband or brother.

"Ah! Madam Patty," cried he, gaily, "we are all again infinitely and eternally obliged for your ready woman's wit. But for you, I believe we should be on our road to the Tower."

She gave him a smiling glance from her brilliant and expressive eyes, and then conducted the Prince into the house. Mr. Giles Orme, I observed, had not presented himself, as I consider a host should have done under such circumstances, when he was receiving so illustrious a personage.

I rode back to Ravensthorpe sadly enough. I was anxious for the safety of the Prince, and vexed at the evident good understanding between Law and this lady. However I tried

to reason with myself that I had no right to be jealous, even if my feeling of annoyance amounted to that. I had seen the Lady Cynthia but three times, I knew not her history; but love is so unreasoning a passion, that I did not overcome my unpleasing reflections by knowing them to be absurd.

A day or two afterwards I heard accidentally that Mr. Giles Orme and his daughter, in their coach and four, had left Gloucestershire.

By private messenger I received a few lines from the Lady Cynthia informing me that one I cared for was in safety.

I had another piece of business to settle—Squire Joddrell should not escape me. There was a young man belonging to the county, named Clinton. I had known him at Oxford, and knew him to be as ardent a Royalist as myself. Clinton rode over to Middleton Hall, carrying my challenge; he had consented to

act as my second in this affair. I gave Squire Joddrell his choice of time, of place, and of weapons; but Clinton failed to deliver my letter, for he found that Joddrell had left for London. To town I proposed, as soon as I could, to follow him, accompanied by Clinton.

Neither was I able to demand an explanation of Gerard, had I wished to do so; for both he and the Sqnire had started to Gloucester to take the law of old Gaffer and Gammer Andrews.

CHAPTER VII.

AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

A FEW days later, at an early hour, the squire sent for me to the library, where he sometimes transacted his business.

My father was seated in an elbow chair, dressed in his red velvet suit, his long full-bottomed wig covered his head, and concealed his low and receding forehead. Mr. Secretary Gerard was plying his trade, seated at a table covered with papers; as I entered, he rose, saluted me with great respect, and then continued his task.

I had been greatly puzzled why I had been

sent for, my debts and creditors were much upon my conscience! but I soon discovered that my father was in uproarious good humour, which surprised me, for I reflected that it was too early an hour for him to have been drinking.

"Here is a fine stroke of business!" he exclaimed. "It will double your income, you lucky young dog. I have settled with her father, Mr. Giles Orme, that you should marry his daughter and heiress, the Mistress Patty."

I was so wholly unprepared for this announcement that I did not understand what he was saying, still less did I realize how this singular remark vitally affected me.

"Do ye understand?" said the squire, noticing my bewildered air. "Do you hear what I say? Don't tell me, you ungrateful young cub, that you will none of this marriage."

"But," said I. "Does Mistress Orme agree to this arrangement? Is it possible she has consented to this marriage?"

"What has her consent got to do with it? Though she is a pretty baggage enough. Her father has consented, that is all that is wanted. I can't conceive there would be any objection on her side; indeed, her father is only a trader, while our family is as good as any in England."

I stammered that, provided Mistress Orme thought me sufficiently worthy, there was no objection on my part.

"Hark ye, sirrah!" continued the squire, working himself up into one of those fits of fury with which I was so familiar. "Your marriage with this gentlewoman will, I hope, wean you from your infatuated and treasonable practices, for her father is a most loyal Whig. I know you are an undutiful son, a horse-racing, card-playing re-

probate; all this can be forgiven to youth and folly, but that you should be an ill subject, and bring yourself and me to ruin, I will not suffer."

"Sir, know once and for all, that no cowardly fear of consequence shall ever change my determination to live and die for the King over the Water."

"That's neither here nor there. Zounds! You will end in the gallows, and a very good thing too. But Squire Orme would speak with you; so order your horse, and ride over to Buckland without any delay. And if you don't marry this lady—Blood! I will disinherit you."

Before starting, I determined to see what my mother thought of this sudden and inexplicable affair.

"My dear Nevill," cried she, with an air of happiness rarely seen on her face, "nothing could delight me so much. Knowing

that your father, tempted by the Orme's wealth, had thought of such a marriage, I myself have called on the young lady and her father. Mr. Giles Orme, seems a worthy man, if such are to be found among Presbyterian Hanoverians: but Mistress Orme herself is lovely and most charming. I own I was greatly surprised; she is perfectly well-bred, and has that ease of manner only to be seen among those who have mixed in the great world. How is it that such beauty, grace, and elegance, can be found in the daughter of Mr. Giles Orme? Then, her fortune is considerable. Your father, through his attorney, has made every inquiry. It seems that Mr. Giles Orme will give as her marriage portion the whole of the fine Buckland New Cross estate; on which there are, as you know, two mansions. The lands bring in a rental of three thousand a-year from twenty-six farms—and this estate

adjoins our land. Ah, sweet son, I should die happy were you once so well married!"

I kissed my mother's hand, and felt delighted, that in following a course which so suited my inclination, I was acting in a way to give her pleasure.

Still I was shocked at the suddenness, even the indelicacy, with which this marriage had been made up between me and a stranger. A lady, beautiful and virtuous, as I felt sure she was, still a lady whose life and surroundings were mysterious, and unlike those of other women. If Giles Orme were a Whig and a Dissenter, what was Mistress Patty, and why this indecorous and sudden haste?

I ordered my horse to ride over to Buckland Manor. I remembered that the Lady Cynthia might desire to speak to me about matters which concerned the cause I valued above all other things, and at a quick gallop I rode over the wolds, and drew up at Squire Orme's house.

I observed a number of workmen and strangers loitering at the door of the inn of the hamlet of Buckland New Cross, who seemed to me not to look like our honest Gloucestershire folk. I concluded they were Mr. Orme's foreign masons and carpenters. I even met some of the heavily-loaded wagons, drawn by eight horses, which had so much excited Lady Betty's surprise; indeed, I had to hasten my pace to escape the terrific dust they caused.

I found Squire Orme—as they called him—in the Cedar parlour. He was a small, thin, elderly man. His pale pinched face and thin lips had none of that extraordinary sweetness which characterised the rosy mouth of Mistress Patty.

"Sir," said he, "I am given to understand by your father that you are a suitor to my daughter's hand. She is too dutiful to refuse any marriage which I should propose to her;

still I may tell you that you are, yourself, far from being unpleasing to her. I will send for Mistress Patty, that you may hear from herself that your suit will be accepted both by her and by me. My money, I own, I draw from trade with the East Indies, but what I can give my daughter will be sufficient to place you among the wealthiest squires of England. As the estates in this country, I have lately purchased, borders on your land for two miles I consider that the joining of two such fine properties will be very advantageous, both to my daughter and for you."

Mr. Orme presently departed, and Mistress Patty then entered. With a charming curtsey she responded to my deep bow. My whole soul seemed again plunged into the pensive depths of her eyes. I was more than ever ill at ease in her presence. I seemed rendered awkward and confused; now that I had heard that the undying affection I had so suddenly

conceived for this lady was in some measure returned.

"Madam," said I, taking her hand, "I shall think myself the most fortunate of men should you, when you know me better, accept my suit."

I was soon aroused from my dreams by her saying,—

"Sir, I know that our fathers have designed our marriage, but, before we proceed further, I must tell you with frankness and candour that such an union is impossible."

"Madam, for pity's sake give me some hope?"

"Sir, had I been free to wed, your handsome person, and brave and ingenuous character, would have touched—and indeed have touched —my heart. I believe you, sir, to be the soul of honour; I therefore confide my secret to you. See," she said, drawing off her splendid rings, and showing me the small circlet of

plain gold of a wedding-ring, "I am already a wife."

"Madam!" cried I, stung with surprise and disappointment, "does Mr. Orme countenance this deceit, that you pass for a maid while you are already a wife, for both his conduct, and yours, to me is difficult to understand. It seems that you have conspired to jest with me and my father."

"Pardon me, sir, when you know all, you will pity and forgive me. Circumstances oblige me to conceal my marriage; and though I love my father, who is the best of men, I dare not inform him of my real position. The overtures for this marriage originated with Squire Ravensthorpe. My father is anxious that I should have a home of my own, dazzled by your wealth, rank, I may add by your virtues, he considered you a desirable match for me; but I cannot marry any one." The lady's beautiful eyes were full of tears. "I

prefer explaining my position to you, who I know to be worthy of trust, but I tell you truthfully that I should involve myself in endless difficulties should I disclose to Mr. Orme all that happened when he was away trading in the East Indies."

"But, madam, tell me in charity what is the barrier that separates us? To whom are you wedded?"

"Do not ask me to-day, there are some things so painful that we cannot speak about them. I will tell you about my husband when I can sufficiently calm myself; but to-day it is impossible."

"Are you married to Law of Laurieston?"

"No," she said, turning deadly pale when I mentioned his name; "he is a near relation, that is all the tie which unites us. But in pity, sir, do not torture me by raising a host of sleeping memories. What can you know, sir, of such overwhelming miseries as I

have lived through, or even what can you know of the love, the peace, and happiness which I have lost? We are much of an age, but I have lived through centuries, if you count by epochs of happiness and years of misery. Some day, when our friendship counts by months instead of days, I may unfold to you the life of a fortunate and yet most unhappy woman."

"Madam, I am so much your obedient servant, that to see and love you is all I ask. I know I am unworthy of such worth and sweetness as yours, but count me still as your friend."

"Let that be our truce," she said with a sad smile. "You must tell Squire Ravensthorpe either that I will not marry you, or, as you will, that you will not marry me."

Our interview was cut short by a footman bringing in several letters, on receiving which Mistress Orme turned very white.

"A special messenger from London. God grant he brings good news."

She broke the seal. A look of relief came over her face.

"Thank God! the Prince is safe: he sailed last night in the brig Dontelle for St. Malo, with so swift a craft and so good a captain he is in no danger. Joddrell, for the present, will not accept your challenge, sir. He is on his way to Paris, and leaves Dover to-night, and proposes to make a long tour through Bavaria and Italy. Either he feared being called to account by some loyal gentleman, or he had not the heart to meet his neighbours after his dastardly conduct—, There, read that!" said Lady Cynthia, with a bitter smile.

It was a letter from a Jacobite gentleman in London, saying he had observed Gerard Ravensthorpe stepping out of a Ministerial house in Downing Street, and also that this

Gerard had been to the Duke of Cumberland's levée.

"We need no more proof of his double dealing. What call had he to wait upon that ruthless butcher?"

I shall challenge him this very night, thought I, though I did not confide my intention to Mistress Orme. And presently I took my leave of her and returned homewards.

As I rode from the door of Buckland Manor the cold fresh evening air seemed not to clear my brain. What did Law's embracing this lady mean? What was her history? How had she, a woman so essentially feminine and gentle, become so active and important a member of the Jacobite party? She was beautiful and fascinating, and her age could barely exceed mine, although she looked less girlish in her morning dress than when I had first met her. I would as soon mistrust the sun in heaven as doubt that she was truth and honour itself.

Here a rough-looking man, on a dapple mare, drew up alongside my horse; the figure was so uncouth-looking that I thought I was on the point of being attacked by a gentleman of the road. However, it was not long before I recognised under the slouching hat the face of my foster-brother, Diggory Hogben.

"Why, Diggory, my man, I took you for a highwayman."

"And like I am, sir, to become one, since my betters prevent me leading an honest life."

"Why, what has happened?"

He then he told me that they were well-nigh ruined by my father having instituted a series of actions against them at Gloucester. The cost of these protracted suits, and the having to attend at so distant a place, during which time their farm labour was neglected, for they worked with their own hands,—all

this had thrown them, for the first time, behind-hand with their rent. And that, now the squire threatened that unless the full sum was paid that week, he would cause an execution to be raised upon their farm-stock and furniture, and that this would complete their ruin.

The quarrel had begun by two trees in a storm having been blown down on their land, they had drawn them out of the field, and had burnt some of the branches and small wood. The squire, happening to come that way, accused them of cutting down timber, which accusation they denied. He declared they had forfeited their lease, and that he would turn them off his land, for he taxed them also, most unjustly, with having sold straw off the farm. He was so unreasonably enraged that he had vowed never to rent any of his land to them more; and that he would drive them from the parish. Diggory Hogben complained to me how hard it was for them, especially

for his father and mother, who were old, to leave hearth and home, to go and die among strangers.

"'Tis utterly monstrous, my honest friend," cried I, beside myself with indignation. "No, never shall you cease to be our tenants, No, never shall such an iniquitous deed be done if I can prevent it!"

Diggory Hogben then reminded me that their farm called Greystones was on my private estate, and that he counted upon me to say a word "to his worship"

"Never fear!" cried I. "Tell Joan Hogben that she shall end her days at Greystones."

"The Wicked Squire" was no fool. He had hard common sense, determination, and perseverance; despite his want of intellect there was a vein of low cunning running through his character, which served him instead of the higher and more delicate organisation of soul and reason. Unscrupulous he certainly

was, but he rarely undertook an evil deed in which he failed. He had a kind of animal instinct which gave him success in his undertakings, and was as useful to him as the reasoning of a far more intellectual nature. How different he was to any other member of our family! That Ravensthorpe, who had raised the county to fight the Armada in the time of Queen Elizabeth, of whom it was said in an ancient ballad:—

> His men and tenants wailed the day,
> His kin and county cried;
> Both old and young in the land may say
> Woe worth the day he died.

In taking up the cudgels for the Hogbens I in a vague way foresaw that I should grievously offend my father, and for my mother's sake I did not wish to quarrel with him.

But no such scruple restrained me in Gerard Ravensthorpe's case. Are there any vices so loathsome to any honest man as ingratitude

and treachery? The father of evil is called the father of lies—eh, and of lying-treachery too I should think,—he seeks to deceive and to betray! My blood boiled with rage to think that this fawning sycophant, fed by my hand, eating my bread, was in the dark, trying to betray me and the Cause. Good God! I should have felt justified in murdering him; and I swore that if he and I lived he should at all events meet me in fair fight.

As I dismounted at my own door I had two just quarrels on my hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

A QUARREL.

RAVENSTHORPE was an ancient manor-house of the time of Elizabeth and it was very dear to me, but as I rode through the great avenue of ash trees and dismounted at the front door I was in no happy frame of mind. A servant who was waiting my arrival announced that the squire and her ladyship were in the pink room and would see me.

I found my mother at her tea table, but I had barely entered when the squire bawled out—he was a great master of the art of vociferation—

"How did you fare? What pin-money did they ask for the lady? You told them I hope that the estate could not bear a heavy settlement for younger children, and that the lady should have nothing more than the dower laws allow her. They will try and drive a hard bargain, but I'll be more than a match for them, d——n me if I won't. Mere city people! Mushroom folk! It is too great an honour for such upstarts to marry into an ancient family like ours."

But my mother, who saw from my countenance that something had gone wrong, cried out,—

"You have not prospered, Nevill. I see it in your face."

I said, with as much calmness as I could, that neither Mistress Orme nor I had any inclination for this alliance.

"Look 'e, that's neither here nor there," said the squire, flying into a violent rage

"Inclination be d——d! I am astonished at your assurance. What are your inclinations to me? I am resolved on the matter. Inclinations, indeed! 'Tis a match between two estates, rather than between two people. Blood! None of your out-of-the-fashion romantic nonsense for me. I have known couples who entirely disliked each other lead very comfortable genteel lives; you are enough to try the patience of the devil."

He flew off into a rage, and uttered many phrases improper to relate; but what distressed me more than his fury was to see the disappointment painted on my mother's face.

The vexations of that day had not tended to put me into the best of tempers, and I was highly incensed at the treatment the Hogbens had received. The time was ill chosen to open this subject, but I disliked Mistress Orme's name being bandied about in the way it had been, the squire even calling her a

hussey, so I launched into a quarrel which led to very serious results.

"Know, sir," said I, "that I will not be treated any more as an overgrown schoolboy. How came you, sir, to turn my tenants off my land without my consent? I am of age. Uplands Farm is in my own hands, and, without even asking my leave, you have ordered bailiffs into Hogben's house. Your conduct is censured by every one in this county, and even in the next, and be sure, once for all, that I will not connive at so base and barbarous an action."

If the squire was enraged before I thought he would then have had a fit, and he absolutely foamed at the mouth as he answered,

"Rat me! Marry come up! so this is your dutiful conduct; you chide me for taking the law of the Hogbens! 'Od rabbit! You are backing up these rogues against me, are you? Then know this, sir, as long as you

retain one of that crew on your land you are no son of mine."

"And know sir, that, if it please you or not, they shall stay on my land."

The squire had an attack of gout, which had not tended to sweeten his temper; he became almost inarticulate with rage.

"D—— if they shall, that's all, that's all. D—— if they shall! Begone, you knave! Begone, you scoundrel! Leave this house, and never let me see your face more. Thomas! John!" roared he to the footmen who came running in, "turn him out of the doors. I will never give you a halfpenny, no, nor the twentieth part of a brass farthing. Leave the house immediately, and see, Thomas, that his things are sent after him. Go! Go this instant."

I will not repeat all the angry and bitter things we said to each other, for I was as incensed as he was, and, under provocation,

said things which filial respect might have better left unsaid.

"I will go," I cried, "and never will I again put foot in a house which you have made a hell upon earth and a by-word in the whole county."

"Nevill!" cried my wretched mother, "you are mad—beside yourself."

Hot and angry as I left his room, in the corridor I stumbled upon Gerard, who had been attracted by the loud altercation and the bawling and roaring of the squire, which, indeed, could have been heard nearly all over the house.

The sight of his misshapen figure recalled to me the baseness of his double-faced conduct. I drew my sword and called to him:—

"Draw and defend your worthless life."

Gerard drew. He was well skilled in fencing, and he was even a more practised swordsman than myself. We made several passes, but my mother, hearing the clashing of

swords and the outcries of the footmen, rushed in between us. Gerard was not at all anxious to fight, and at once moved as quickly as he could to a safe distance.

"Sir, you seem minded to murder me. If I have offended you I beg your pardon; but I am not conscious of having put any affront upon you," said he.

Then I told him roundly:—

"Thou shalt yet give me the satisfaction of a gentleman, for thou art a Hanoverian spy, a traitor, and a paid informer."

At this Gerard's thin face turned an ashy hue.

"It is false!" he cried.

"You lie!" said I, "for I have found proofs of thy villany."

"Gerard, leave us, I command you" cried my mother. "Nevill, I beseech you cease quarrelling."

Gerard Ravensthorpe required no second

invitation to flight; he ran away through an open door nimbly enough.

"Is he gone?" bawled the squire; and I heard by the noise on the polished floor of the stick by which he supported himself on account of his gout that he was coming from his room.

"Go!" cried my mother, "do not renew this disgraceful scene; the less said the soonest mended."

"Let him die! starve! rot! he shall never have a farthing of mine. Gregory—John—you lazy knaves, turn him out. If it was not for my leg, I'd soon send him out. A fine piece of work, truly; I have brought up a son for a fine purpose! A fine kettle of fish! John! do you hear? Is he gone? D—— you all!"

"Yes, sir—yes, your honour," cried the men; "the young Squire is a-going."

"Rat me! Is he gone? Gone? Gone? I say!"

"Go my dearest," said my mother, finding my hat and kissing me, "and come privately to night at dusk, by the back door, to my closet, for I have much to say to you. The squire is incensed just now, perhaps a few civil words will satisfy him some days hence."

I walked about a mile to an ale-house, and stayed there all day, and there my body-servant brought my things. At dusk, through the woods to escape observation, I reached Ravensthorpe, and noiselessly, like a thief, entered my mother's room.

She looked so wan, ill, and heart-broken that I recalled the weird figure which had stood by my bedside years before.

"Mother!" cried I, horror-struck at her appearance, "let me send for a doctor and an apothecary; you are ill."

"I have a pain in my heart," she said, placing her hand on her side. "Nevill, thou canst not understand all I fear. One terror in

my mind would be first, another would be first, all would be first. I shall lose my reason."

"My dearest lady, be calm; thy fears are all for me. I have arrived at man's estate, and can protect myself."

"Yes, dear soul, I fear for thee, and thou knowest not all I fear. This marriage with this Mistress Orme would have given me so much joy, it would have been the making of thy fortune and thy happiness."

"Thou might have guessed the lady refused my offer of marriage."

"I thought as much,—but why?" The wild strange look of fear and despair came over her face.

"Did she suspect anything, think you?"

"What should she suspect," cried I, thinking really that trouble had clouded the lady's brain.

"Suppose that she had heard you were

neither as well-born nor as wealthy as it is commonly reputed, would that have caused her refusal of thy offer?"

"Nonsense, madam!" cried I; "she is a woman of sense; if she had heard some such foolish story she would have treated it with the contempt it deserved. I know not Mistress Orme's history; but, if I may be allowed to guess at what I know not, I think she loves and is beloved by some loyal and unfortunate gentleman."

"If she has spurned thy love, never will she find a more honest, honourable, and loving heart, nor a man of finer presence than thine."

"You are too partial, madam, to be a judge."

"Gerard Ravensthorpe has escaped thee. He left last night most suddenly for France; thou canst offer him no fresh violence."

"Gone!" I exclaimed, "the coward! But

when we next meet I shall give him his choice of time, of place, and of weapons."

"If thou shouldest be sent to thy account in pursuing him!"

"Then, madam, I should be killed in a just quarrel."

"Why has Gerard gone to France, Nevill? Why?" asked the poor lady with her wild sad eyes fixed upon me. "If thou knewest all! my son, but I will not tell thee neither! If thou could'st only understand all I fear for thee; but it is so dreadful I dare not put it into words. Dearest son, thou hast ever been dutiful and loving to me; I fear for thee."

She walked backwards and forwards, wringing her hands like one distracted.

"Fear naught for me, madam, I can defend myself."

"Nay, poor youth! thou canst not do so; I am like one distraught; thought, grief, confusion, come crowding so thick upon me. Oh,

my poor head! Nevill, should they succeed in their wicked plot against thee, it will break my heart."

"What plot. Would they indite me before the Government as a malcontent?"

"Worse than that! worse than that!"

"I am weary of mysteries; speak out, madam! let me hear the worst."

"But I know not the worst; it is this very mystery—this knowing of some certain but unknown evil—that haunts me night and day."

Her mind is affected, thought I; solitude cruelty, and misery, have overturned the balance of a brain of the first order.

"The squire said he would let thee 'rot and die in the streets.'"

"He cannot, mother; the estate is entailed; and, until I inherit it, my own small land of Upland Tower is enough for my necessities. It is held independently of the squire."

"Begone dearest! they are bringing him."

We heard the sound of the four men-servants stumbling up-stairs, carrying the squire to bed in his usually nightly state of helpless inebriation.

I left by the back-stairs and spent the night at the ale-house.

CHAPTER IX.

CYNTHIA'S HISTORY.

THE ale-house in which I had taken refuge was but a hedgerow inn, and the accommodation was very poor, but sumptuous compared to what I was afterwards to experience, still that was of little moment compared with the uneasy thoughts which distracted my mind,—my mother's illness, for she grew worse day by day, the loss of Mistress Orme, and the knowledge that I had been turned out of doors by the squire. I did not foresee how this quarrel would be mended, for he was very vindictive, and could ill brook contradiction, and had especially resented being prevented from performing an unjust

action. I gave myself up to gloomy reflections, which quickly turned to joy on receiving this unexpected letter from the Lady Cynthia:

"Buckland Manor, June 14th, 1751.

"Sir,—It is impossible to express what I have felt since I last saw you. Your submitting on my account, to such cruel insults from your father lay me under an obligation I shall ever own. My father has been informed by Squire Ravensthorpe that I am the unfortunate cause of his resentment against you, and that nothing short of our marriage will reconcile him to you again. My father requests that you will honour us by remaining some weeks at our house; and that he will exert himself to bring about that reconciliation which we must all be anxious to effect.

"Your obedient servant,

"PATIENCE ORME."

I accepted this invitation with extreme joy, and every day I became increasingly enamoured of my lady's rare beauty and still rarer qualities of heart and mind.

Ah! Buckland Manor House, I passed within thy walls the happiest unclouded days that man ever spent. I had fallen wildly in love with the Lady Cynthia at first sight, and now that I was blessed with her daily companionship I found her the most beautiful, the most witty, and the gayest of mortals; and I say this after forty years, that my lady was the best and sweetest of created beings.

After leaving the hedgerow inn, and even after my own home, where, though we lived befitting our quality, still we lived with homeliness and thrift, I felt amazed at the lavish expenditure and magnificence of this newly-erected house of Buckland Manor, or Buckland New House, as our Gloucestershire folk called it. The size of Giles Orme's house, the

number of his horses, his retinue of servants, announced princely splendour. I doubt if His Grace of Porchester (who was not wealthy) ever tried to equal it.

Young as I was, I seemed to discover that Giles Orme, having wealth (which men so much prize), was determined that the world should know how rich he was. He had perceived that people courted him for his money, and talked of his fortune; and therefore he was minded to live in a manner that the county should say how wealthy he was. I believe Giles Orme was a true, honest, and just man, and he dearly loved his daughter; still his fault was a too great love of money, and a too great regard for the world's esteem.

But Mistress Patty Orme, was she mercenary? No! A thousand times no! If God ever sent one of his angels in human flesh on this earth, that angel was my dearest lady..

Mistress Patty, created beautiful, was always dressed in a style and splendour quite unknown, up to that time, in our county, for she obtained all her exquisite (outlandish our Gloucestershire folks called them) fashions from London, and even from Paris. What matter though what she wore? She looked as lovely in a cambric dress as in a brocaded sack. She smiled and laughed, and said soft kind words, dress her how you would. It was in her nature, as it is in the nature of all true men and women, to be unselfish and generous, to pity misfortune, and to hate what was vile and unjust. But what was peculiar to this sweetest and best of women was, that by some magic in her this world seemed brighter to all who approached her. The very serving-men and wenches waited upon her with alacrity and joy. A child, or a dog, or one old, or the poor and miserable, came to Mistress Orme with confidence. Go, cynic, and say such

women exist not. Hast thou had no mother, sister, or one dearer, of whom thou wilt say, "Although all women are weak, foolish, ignorant. And yet there was one, yes, and that one resembled Mistress Orme."

She was very gay, her laugh sounded like music, and she had a light merry way of talking; yet nevertheless she spoke kindly and generously of all. I loved her as a man loves only once in his life.

Yet Buckland New House to me was a strange and mysterious place. The wealth, the splendour, the beauty of the house was evident, but still I felt I did not understand that new and charmed world in which I had entered. What was Cynthia's history? and how came Mr. Orme by his untold gold?

Giles Orme spoke little, but his mind seemed to run upon his ships laden with merchandize, which were upon the seas. I soon discovered he was a Whig, and that he

was most loyal to the present Establishment, but he spoke little on any subject; politics were never discussed at his table. He had a passion for music, and every afternoon after his dinner his daughter would play the beautiful melodies of Mr. Haydn, upon her spinnet, and then he would fall asleep.

The day I arrived Mr. Orme treated me with great courtesy. "Sir," he said, bowing low to me, "I am happy and proud to welcome you as my future son-in-law." Madam Patty blushed, smiled, and did not contradict him.

I had been at Buckland Manor but two days when one morning Giles Orme said to me—he was apparently exceedingly angry—

"Sir, I had every wish to forward a marriage between my child and you, believing you to be a man of good position and large estates, and I hoped to advance my daughter's interests. Is it to be credited that your father,

through his attorney, has given me what has been proved to be a false statement of his affairs? Much of his land is heavily mortgaged, and this fact he has concealed. Does he take me for a child or a fool to be hoodwinked? or that I shall allow my sweet girl to be cheated? 'Know, sir, that every farthing of Madam Patty's money shall be settled upon her, as tight as lawyers and the law can do it."

I reasoned long and patiently with Mr. Ormc and, I think, I persuaded him that I was no supporter of my father's acts, and that I had no desire to possess Mistress Ormc's fortune.

"Sir, my daughter is partial to you, in fact you are the first suitor whose advances she has ever listened to with patience, but I tell you that, unless your estate is as large and as unencumbered as I had supposed it to be, I shall withdraw my consent to this marriage."

I was utterly dismayed at this threat, still I

soon recovered my spirits, because I knew our estate was large, and I also knew for certain that the mortgages were of no moment; I saw that Squire Orme must have been irritated, and greatly so, by finding my father (through his attorneys, Badge and Fudges of Gloucester) was trying to gain some mean advantage over him in an underhand way.

My mother was very ill. She wrote me long letters such as this, from which I feared her mind was wandering: "Come not here, they seek thy ruin. Hasten thy marriage, sweet son, and leave this county where thou hast been so cruelly wronged. Oh! Nevill! when I think of thy injuries I am distraught. Come not here. Oh! base black heart! that would compass the disgrace of his own son."

Her mind seemed unhinged, and her frenzy of all others was that she no longer wished to see me.

Mistress Honor, my mother's maid, would

give the most melancholy accounts of the poor lady's state. She was a prisoner locked in her apartments, well tended and served, but not allowed to go abroad, although, in fact, she was too ill to do so. Moreover she sat and wept all day, but what the special nature of her sorrow was none could guess, for she never spoke of it. Moreover, for hours she would walk up and down her chamber, wringing her hands.

My mother forbade me coming to her, but Mistress Orme went nearly every day and was welcome. I drove or rode with Mistress Patty to Ravensthorpe, leaving her when she entered our park, and I waited at the alehouse until she came back.

It was her gay young face, her tender sympathy, her cheering words, which alone seemed to revive hope in the wretched disordered mind of my poor mother.

"Thou wilt love him and care for him when

I am gone. Thou wilt be a true and loving wife to him;" she would repeat over and over again. What could sweet Lady Cynthia say? She could not reason with the crushed and wretched creature whom she visited to console; but she would say cheerfully —

"Nay, dear madam! brood on no such melancholy thoughts; when the spring-weather comes you shall stay with us at Buckland and see your son again."

"But, nay, sweet Patty," she would answer, "I dare not look in Nevill's face, and I wish never to see the flowers of spring again."

We thought that act of violence of the squire's in turning me from home, coming after her many years of loneliness and misery, had overturned her mind.

"If thou wouldst marry my son, sweet madam, that is the only happiness I can hope for."

Mistress Orme would reply, "Madam, in

the matter of my marriage I cannot disoblige my father; when he sees fit to order my wedding then I am ready to obey him."

I had been at Buckland Manor two months, but still I had not heard the Lady Cynthia's history. Once or twice I had pressed her to tell me.

"Have patience, sir," she would answer; then she would look so white and frightened that I regretted having asked her, and would most humbly beg her pardon.

One afternoon we were walking in the great park, full of splendid trees, in which the manor-house stood.

"Sweet Cynthia!" cried I, "you once promised that you would tell me your history. Do not think that idle curiosity prompts me to wish to discover what you would keep secret, but all that concerns you is dear to me."

The lady then unfolded to me the following narrative:—

"My mother was a French lady of fortune, my father was a merchant of Bristol, and joined the East India Company of merchants. This obliged him to live in the East Indies; during his absence my mother resided in Paris; being a Romanist and a very religious woman she lodged mostly in nunneries. My earliest recollections are of churches, cloisters, priests, and nuns. My mother's extreme piety and her serious surroundings gave a melancholy or at least thoughtful tinge to my childhood. I was educated by the nuns of the order of St. Dominique in Paris. They were a very wealthy order, and received only girls of noble birth. To that I laid no claim, but my mother's devotion, united to her large fortune, and the fact of my father being a foreigner, made them receive us, for my mother also lodged in their convent. My early companions were all the children of people of quality, and

mostly people well-known at the French Court. In this way I acquired a habit of dressing with elegance, and of seeing and living in large and stately houses. My mother's time was so fully occupied with religious observances, that for ordinary intercourse with the world she had neither time nor inclination. We lived, however, on terms of great intimacy with a Jacobite family of the name of Law, Scotch people living in straitened circumstances; still a large, gay, and lively family, and their house was to me a home. My mother's health, never good, being in a critical condition, she married me, at the age of fifteen, to Archibald Law, whom I had known and loved all my life, and who was but nineteen. Archibald Law was the handsomest youth I have ever seen. He was tall, fair, noble-looking; but if, sir, you had known how gentle, brave, loving, and God-fearing he was,—how from childhood he

had been to me as the best loved of brothers, —you could then understand how much I loved him. His family are now, and were then, dear to me as blood relations. The never-to-be-forgotten year '45' arrived. My husband, Archibald Law, his father and his brothers, left Paris for Scotland, and took their part in the rising of that year. They shared in Prince Charles's triumphant march into England, they were with him at Manchester, and at the crowning triumph of Derby. Mrs. Law, my husband's mother, ventured to return to England, living in modest lodgings in London; she expected to escape observation, and the better to avoid recognition, they adopted my name of Orme, and I, as Patty Orme, passed as one of the numerous Law family. My fortune supported us all. When the Prince was at Derby, and things looked so bright for the Cause, we were wild with pleasure and excite-

ment. When the Scotch army had to retreat, and this was followed by their total defeat at Culloden, we were thrown into the deepest despair, the more particularly as my husband was a prisoner in the hands of the Hanoverian. Now here the most singular part of my history commences. Archibald Law was marched down with a batch of prisoners from Manchester. He was confined in the Tower and was sentenced to death, but that sentence was never carried out; though if he still lingers in prison, or if he has escaped, or where he is, I have never been able to discover, and I have never been able to find him. Alas sir! the fate of my husband is seldom out of my thoughts. He is not dead, believe me! Perhaps he lingers as a slave in the West Indies, or, worse still, languishes in some jail, or he is a beggar in some foreign land."

The lady spoke with difficulty; her countenance was turned from me, but I could see that

it was with the greatest effort that she abstained from weeping.

"To search for him, to help his friends, and the Cause for which he suffered, since I have lost my beloved one, has been the only object for which I live."

"And how, madam," said I, "is it that you know that your ill-fated husband has not, like many others, suffered the extreme penalty of the law?"

"Because," said Cynthia, "I have stood near the gallows at every execution of Jacobites; I have looked into the faces of all who have suffered in London; I have seen young and old pass me, and yet I never looked upon the countenance of the gay and brave youth from whom I was parted in Paris eight years ago."

"Good God! madam, how was it possible you had the nerve to stand so ghastly—so horrible a spectacle?"

"Do you think I did it for idle pleasure? No, but I thought that if Archibald Law passed, that he would see me, and that he would know he was not forgotten, and that I should see him once more before he died."

"Then you loved him so much?"

"Yes, I loved him. No one in this world will ever be so dear to me again."

"Now I come to a part of my history in which I fear I acted wrongly. My father arrived from the East Indies, and expressed the warmest displeasure at finding me living with Jacobites and Romanists, because he was by birth and breeding a Whig, and by creed a Dissenter. He removed me from the care of the Law family; I returned to live with him, and his kindness to me soon won my heart, for we had met as strangers.

"My father did not know I had been married to Archibald Law. The letter my mother had sent telling him of this had never

reached him—the ship was lost. The Laws, on their side, recommended me to silence, because, as the wife of a Rebel, my fortune might have been seized, and I, acting, as I ever do, on impulse, was easily persuaded to think, because silence was expedient, it was right; and, having once adopted this line of conduct, every year makes explanation become more difficult. When my father arrived, he had not even heard of my poor mother's death, as he had been a whole year at sea on his voyage from India. As years passed, I never informed my father of this marriage. In my search for my husband (for I still seek him) I became useful to many of the unfortunate party. I had wealth, the command of my mother's fortune, and independence. Political motives I neither understand, nor do they greatly influence me, at least not so strongly as a desire to help my husband's friends, or any who are in misfortune —such misfortune as his."

The lady spoke here in the deepest agitation.

"I heard an old French gentlewoman say, 'I show mercy to others that God may show mercy to me.' In helping some prisoners to escape; in sending some father, brother, or son, back to a home of loving hearts; ah, sir, who shall say but that God may yet show mercy to me, and send Archibald Law back to me!"

The impression this relation made upon me may be imagined; but I was so intoxicated by my present happiness that I thought of no future.

My mother's health improved. She was much consoled at my being so well received at Buckland Manor, though my father refused to see me, unless I turned the Hogbens out of their farm; but I thought little of his resentment at the time, I was so happily absorbed in the society of Mistress Orme. I felt and knew that my love for her was returned, and I

was ready to wait—to wait a hundred years—at her bidding, and that with patience. As for the luckless Archibald Law, if I thought of him at all, I considered it was exceedingly unlikely that he should ever return to disturb my peace; and I confidently awaited the day when I should conduct Mistress Patty to our parish church as my bride.

CHAPTER X.

UPLAND TOWER.

THE year 1752 opened very happily; my mother's peace of mind and her bodily health in some measure returned, although she still, in moments of depression, spoke of hidden and mysterious dangers, nevertheless Madam Ravensthorpe now gladly saw me. I however had to visit her secretly, as, although I had written several submissive letters to the squire, his wrath against me was not to be appeased.

In January 1752 I moved into my own

house of Upland Tower. Both Mistress Orme and her father most hospitably pressed me to stay at Buckland Manor. I felt a delicacy in doing so. I knew that Mistress Orme could not marry me, and yet her father, my mother, and all the world persisted in considering us engaged. This placed me in a very false position. I determined to see my sweet lady almost every day, for I only seemed to live while I was with her. By occupying my own house I thought also that I could forward certain private business with greater ease and safety.

Upland Tower was a small ancient and not over convenient abode: high up in the mountains, it stood alone, far from other human habitations. From its windows (as it had once been a watch-tower) could be seen a magnificent prospect of wooded hills, and ranges upon ranges of blue and purple mountains. My mother sent there an establishment of servants,

furniture, and all that her womanly knowledge imagined I might require.

To Upland Tower came also many waggon-loads of heavy cases and barrels. These goods came from Buckland New Cross, and were drawn by Diggory Hogben's farm-horses and in his carts; they were said to be wine and barrels of beer. But Hogben did not fail to remark how heavy were the packages and cases of claret I received from France, and also what a great quantity of wine I was storing in my cellars, for use in future years.

"'Tis strange," said he; but then Diggory Hogben remarked philosophically that "the quality is always queer."

My servants suspected it was not only claret and port which came, and it was in truth the arms and gunpowder I had promised the Prince, when in London, to store away for him.

These munitions of war were shipped from

St. Malo, in Giles Orme's own ships, among other numerous articles, such as carved marble mantel-pieces from Italy, silk hangings from Paris, pictures from Rome, mirrors from Venice, and all those stately and splendid things Lady Cynthia, from living in Paris, had been accustomed to see around her. Mistress Orme and her father were still decorating and furnishing their new residence with equal taste and magnificence.

We had been engaged for nearly a year if engagement it could be called.—My sweet lady and I had ridden over to Ravensthorpe and had returned to Buckland. Beautiful as Cynthia was at all times, I admired her most in her well-fitting French riding-habit. The other ladies in our county were inclined to think that a gentlewoman should not ride except upon a pillion, and Lady Betty Chester had told me long before how masculine she considered Mistress Orme's attire. Cynthia's

hair was well curled and powdered, and hung to a considerable length upon her shoulders, and was tied by a scarlet ribbon. She had a coat and waistcoat of blue stuff trimmed with silver, with a petticoat of the same. She wore a little beaver hat, edged with silver, and which was made more sprightly by a feather. Her horse also was adorned with scarlet ribbons. We had ridden back to Buckland Manor, cantering over the soft turf of the wolds. When we reached Buckland, I recall that Cynthia's eyes were bright, and her face rosy with exercise; she was standing smiling and jesting at the hall-door; when a special messenger from London rode up, all spattered with mud and travel-stained. He gave my lady a letter; she read it, and turned so white that I thought she would have fallen into a swoon.

"Read this, dear friend," she said to me.

I read the letter; the news it contained was

no less surprising than that Archibald Law had returned, and was in London.

I could not utter a word. This seemed to me my very death-warrant. I should be banished from Cynthia's presence for ever! And yet I knew I was only happy while with her; and that without her I had no object or purpose in life.

That missive was indeed extraordinary. Fate had preserved my rival through many misadventures.

"God be thanked!" said my dear lady, with tears of joy in her eyes. "I knew he would return, my prayers have been answered."

It appeared from the letter, that seven years before Archibald Law had effected his escape at Manchester from a gang of fifty Jacobite prisoners. The sentry, through whose negligence he had got away, had failed to report him missing for fear of being punished. On

the same night another Jacobite prisoner having been added irregularly to his gang, he succeeded in passing him off as Archibald Law.

The true Archibald Law had barely escaped at Manchester when he was seized by the press-gang and put on board a king's ship. They sailed immediately to the Mediterranean, and he was unable to communicate his fate to any one. The sloop in which he was, was shipwrecked, and he was cast on the shores of Barbary. There he was taken prisoner by the Moors, who made him a galley-slave. This frightful lot might have been his for life, but he was ransomed for a large sum by the philanthropy of a stranger, who seeing him, pitied his youth and his misfortunes.

He reached Spain, begged his way to Paris, found his family, who assisted him liberally. Without loss of time, outstripping every messenger, he had posted to England to find his wife.

Law's communication concluded with a notice that he was delayed in London upon urgent business, its nature he could not divulge by letter. We concluded it was some secret service for the Prince. Law wrote, that when at liberty he would come immediately to Gloucestershire, and that he hoped to follow his letter in less than twelve hours.

Those twelve hours were some of the most unpleasant moments of my life. I felt it ungenerous to grudge that hapless man, who had suffered so long and so undeservedly, the joy of returning to a wife who had mourned him so faithfully, and yet in Mistress Cynthia's happy air and delighted smiles I found no pleasure. She told me she would wear a new gown and petticoat of flowered silver of her own work, Brussels lace head-dress and ruffles, her best diamond ring, diamond earrings, solitaire, and her diamond shoe-buckles.

I felt angry and hurt. She seemed un-

conscious of my presence, so occupied was she in thinking in what lace and jewels, the richest and most becoming, she should wear to receive Law.

For my part I could not meet my successful rival. And yet I knew I was wrong. I mounted my horse. I rode at a furious pace over the turf of the wolds to my house of Uplands. I resolved I would leave the kingdom, and go I cared not where, so that I would never look on the face of fair Lady Cynthia again.

I wrote a distracted letter to my mother, telling her my intention, and that I would see her before I left. I then ordered my servants to pack up my things. I was in the midst of a thousand preparations when a horseman, all muddy, and his horse all in a sweat, rode up with a letter from Buckland Manor.

It was from my sweet lady, asking me to'

come to her at once. Law had been arrested and taken to the Tower.

I rode over to her. I was ushered into her closet, and the Lady Cynthia threw herself into my arms, weeping bitterly.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YEAR 1752.

We next heard that, after Law had been kept in the Tower forty-eight hours, he was carried to where the Privy Council were sitting, and was accused of having returned on a political mission, but he asserted he had returned to his native land on private business. The Privy Councillors even stooped to promises if the captive would make any revelations; he refused, and, finding they could neither frighten nor cajole him, they said he must stand his trial.

The news of his arrest had thrown Mistress Patty into the deepest dejection. I did all I could to cheer her; I pointed out that Law would probably be pardoned, for that he had played so obscure a part in the rising of "'45"; he had only been an ensign in Colonel Grant's regiment, and so long a time had elapsed that it was unlikely he would be treated with great severity. But my mistress refused all comfort.

"My dear friend," she said, "I foresee his execution, and I shall have been the cause of his horrible death."

We posted up to London. The merchant, observing the distracted condition of his daughter, and knowing the exquisite sensibility of her gentle heart, thought her suffering arose from pity for the fate of her youthful companion, as her tender affection for the Law family was well known to him. Mr. Giles Orme was a humane man, although a Whig,

and he openly hoped the rebel would be recommended to His Majesty King George's mercy.

At ten o'clock in the morning of the 17th May, Archibald Law's trial began, at St. Margaret's Hill, Southwark. The Right Honourable the Chief Justice Lee, Sir Martin Wright, and other judges, after a trial of five hours, condemned him to death under the old attainder.

Mistress Orme, her father, and I, were in the court while Sir William Lee pronounced his sentence. The prisoner, a tall handsome man of about five and twenty years of age, was very genteelly dressed, but seemed wholly occupied in scanning his lady's beautiful face, instead of listening to the words Sir William Lee pronounced with emphasis. The sentence was :—

" To return to the prison of the Tower from whence you came, from thence you must be

drawn to the place of execution; when you come there you must be hanged by the neck, but *not* till you are dead, for you must be cut down alive; then your bowels must be taken out and burnt before your face; then your head must be severed from your body, and your body be divided into four quarters, and those must be at the king's disposal; and God Almighty be merciful to your soul."

When Chief Justice Lee reached the declaration as to hanging he looked Law steadily in the face, and seemed, to me, to take a diabolical pleasure in uttering the words, "but *not* till you are dead"; and appeared even vexed at finding no signs that he had terrified his helpless victim.

Archibald Law was carried back to the Tower. He had many to sympathise with him. The Jacobites in London, and even the Court, and numerous Whigs, were full of pity for his fate.

Notwithstanding neither Mistress Orme nor any of his friends were permitted to see him, although some of his near relations obtained access to him. We still hoped for a reprieve. The next day Mistress Orme visited Her Grace of Porchester, and, with her, went to St. James's Palace, to Leinster House, and to the new palace of Kensington. She obtained admittance to the Dowager Princess of Wales and the Princess Amelia, and though they were very courteous to her (having been informed that the doomed prisoner was her lover), they regretted that the law must take its course. Still some word of a pardon had been dropped in some high quarter, and the Lady Cynthia clung to the hope that, even at the last minute, His Majesty's messenger would bring a reprieve. I was surprised to see how confidently she clung to this idea, after the state of despair into which she had been thrown by Law's arrest.

The 7th June was the day fixed for Law to suffer the penalty of a cruel death. Mistress Patty declared her intention of attending the execution; in vain I besought and implored her to avoid so heart-breaking a spectacle, which would, I felt sure, endanger her reason or her life. But she persisted: she vowed she would see Archibald Law pass for the last time. Finding my entreaties vain, I started with her, her father, and her maid, in a hackney-coach.

While our coach was making its way to Tyburn we fell in with a great mob of people of the lower sort, which prevented our equipage progressing. Just then we heard a loud shout and hurrah, which showed the prisoner was approaching along Marylebone Road. As from the concourse of people we could make no progress, I got out of the coach, thinking with two footmen to clear the way, but, instead of this, a rush of the multitude

drifted me from the hackney-coach. I was carried away, quite powerless, by a mob which resembled a furious tide. It was totally impossible to go against that stream; therefore I was forced much against my will to witness one of the most melancholy spectacles man ever beheld.

Mistress Orme never saw Law pass. On hearing the fierce shout of the crowd, as he seemed likely to approach, she swooned, and remained in a fainting condition until she was driven back to her house.

I, however, was forced, by the crowd, into a position near the scaffold, so that I could see the fire and the other horrible preparations. On reaching this place I saw that Archibald Law was dressed in regimentals, a blue coat turned up with red with brass buttons, and he wore a tye-wig. He had been chained by the hangman to a hurdle on which he was

drawn from the Tower to Tyburn. I heard that, before his leaving the Tower for his execution, the deputy-lieutenant, according to custom, cried "God bless King George!" to which the inflexible Mr. Law exclaimed "God bless King James!"

There was an enormous concourse of people, who had stood for several hours in the rain, to see the end of this unhappy man.

Law behaved with great decency at the place of execution; he made a statement to the sheriff that he had always been a member of the Church of Rome; he then asked the sheriff to order it so that he might be quite dead before the burning took place. The latter promised he would see him dead before knife or fire touched him.

He was accompanied by a priest, the very Strickland I had seen with Prince Charles in Westminster. Their discourse continued nearly

a quarter of an hour. He resigned his breath with the almost sacred words on his lips, "Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori."

The executioner pulled a cap out of his pocket, and, putting it on, drew it over his eyes, and he was then immediately turned off. When he had hung about three minutes, the soldiers pulled off his shoes, stockings, and breeches, and the executioner soon deprived him of the rest of his clothing. Then cutting him down, they severed his head from his body, took out his heart and entrails, and threw them into a large fire of faggots, which had been blazing and smoking in a high wind, during the whole time of this ghastly ceremony. His limbs were scarred, but not severed from the body, his head was carried away and placed on Temple Bar.

On the 9th June at midnight, Mistress Orme, her father, and I, and a few Jacobites, saw his desecrated and headless corpse

privately buried in Red Lion Fields near the Foundling Hospital close to Holborn, while, among his fellow religionists, many prayers went up to heaven for his soul.

The horrible death of one she loved threw Mistress Orme into an alarming state of health. She could neither eat nor sleep. She dressed herself in the deepest mourning, saw no company except myself, and she could speak of nothing but of this ghastly tragedy.

The doctor recommended a journey to Bath to drink the waters. To that place I accompanied Mr. Orme and my sweet lady. They lived in the strictest retirement, avoiding all places of public amusement, and after some months Cynthia recovered her bodily strength and some serenity of mind.

CHAPTER XII.

RUINED, 1753.

More than a year had passed since the appalling death of the hapless Law. All legal difficulties had been settled between Mr. Orme and Squire Ravensthorpe in the matter of settlements.

It had been arranged that Mistress Orme and I were to be married on the 14th September, 1753, at the parish church of Buckland New Cross.

Cynthia had regained her ordinary health and, to a certain extent, her usual high spirits.

We had travelled continually, and after leaving Bath we had visited both Tunbridge Wells and Harrogate; and my lady asserted that she had as much benefited by my companionship and devotion as by change of air and scene.

It had been decided that after our wedding, we should take up our residence at the great new house of Buckland Manor. Mr. Giles Orme announced that he had received news from the East Indies which would oblige him to return for a time to look after his business in Bengal. It seemed to occasion him much gratification that his daughter should find a home of her own, and he seemed to be satisfied that I would study her happiness.

I do not think Mr. Orme disliked me, still he had no particular friendship for me. The only human being for whom he entertained real affection was his daughter. The great object of his life was to make money. He

was by nature taciturn, even to moroseness. At heart I despised Mr. Orme's inordinate love of wealth, and considered his ostentatiousness the result of a vulgar mind.

Then I, myself, was of a character and temper with which he had no ideas in common. He could not enter into my love of letters, and the interest I took in all literature, ancient and modern.

He would have looked with utter abhorrence on my Jacobite sentiments, had he suspected them. Still, as Giles Orme was not argumentative, and I had no desire to convert him to my way of thinking, we lived together on very good terms.

It was on the 1st September, 1753, ah, wretched day! burnt with red-hot iron into my soul. The bitterest, the most miserable day in my life; on the fourteenth of that month I was to be married, but I was to find there is many a slip between the cup and the lip.

On the evening before the 1st September, it was a Tuesday, I received a letter from my mother, saying that Gerard Ravensthorpe had arrived from foreign parts, after eighteen months' absence. That she hoped I would avoid seeing him; she added also that Joddrell had returned to Middleton Hall; and she then said that, considering how long a time had elapsed, she hoped I would not renew my quarrel with either of them. For my part, I felt that my duty called me to demand satisfaction from them both. A private affront I could have forgiven, but, after the villainous treachery of their conduct to a Cause I considered sacred; I felt that I could not live, unless I avenged the wrong and insult they had offered to it, and also to my Prince.

On the morning of that hateful 1st of September, I was seated at breakfast at Buckland Manor with Cynthia and Mr. Orme, when I was disturbed by a servant approaching, and

informing me that my father desired my presence at Ravensthorpe. Anticipating no pleasure from the interview, I was still absolutely unprepared for its extraordinary purport.

On arriving at my former home I found my father seated in the library. He was dressed in his brocaded morning-gown and crimson velvet cap. His table was covered with documents relating to the estate, for this was his business-room. In front of him were some tattered and yellow papers.

"Be seated," he said, "for I have a communication to make to you which may occupy some time. A change is impending in your position and circumstances for which I am not responsible, and for which you must look to your own ill fortune, perhaps to your own ill deserving."

I took my seat and bowed.

It at once occurred to me that Cynthia had

suddenly discovered that I did not deserve so much sweetness, or else that something had happened to my beloved, or that her father, in some cross humour, had determined to forbid our union.

My father commenced with some little hesitation in his manner, and an accession of colour to his face. This had become as crimson as his cap.

"You must know," he said, "that after the ill-advised events of the year '15, in which, in my days of youth and folly, I took a prominent part, I was compelled to retire for safety to France. Before reaching that country, while hiding in the north of England, I became enamoured of, and wedded according to the rites of the Church, a young woman of gentle birth, but reduced circumstances. After I had escaped to France she followed me, and for a time we lived in the neighbourhood of Versailles. She soon manifested a frivolity

of disposition and the basest ingratitude; for, although I was compelled to dwell in straitened circumstances, I had bestowed upon her the good name of Ravensthorpe, and she ought to have entertained gratitude for such an honour. I regret to state that she left me with a French officer, who took her to Marseilles. I was soon afterwards informed that she was dead.

"The pardon for my political offences having been obtained, upon receiving the news of my father's decease I returned to England, and married your mother. From papers which your cousin received from an old man, at whose death he was present, three months ago, it appears upon indisputable evidence that this first wife of mine only died a few years ago. She, therefore, was, in good sooth, Madam Ravensthorpe; your mother's marriage is annulled, and you are nameless. I have sent a messenger with a missive to inform Mr.

Orme of these facts; for the union with his daughter was agreed to under the belief that that you were the heir of the Ravensthorpe estates. With regard to your mother my marriage with her shall take place as speedily as possible. With regard to yourself, I am unable to give you a name which may inherit my position. You may retain the name of Nevill Ravensthorpe, but you cannot be the heir of Ravensthorpe Hall. Gerard Ravensthorpe, your cousin, has now become the heir to my position, and, as the estates are requisite to the sustaining it in due dignity, they must accompany it. But I will take care that an allowance be made to you sufficient for your support."

At first I scarcely thought of my changed position in regard to its effect upon myself but only in so far as it affected my relations with Cynthia. Feeling that I was deadly pale, but restraining all signs of emotion,

asked to be permitted to look at the papers. I found a letter, or sort of memoir, addressed to the squire, in which his wife upbraided him with his continued cruelty, and stated that she had changed her name, and given out the report of her death, in order that she might be for ever released from him. I found a brief memoir of her daily life, and instructions that, after her death, which seemed to have been unexpected at the time and to have happened suddenly, a messenger should be found to convey the documents to the squire. Her death was also attested by the French authorities of Marseilles.

Whatever might have been the cause, there was no doubt that I was the victim. I could not trust myself to speak. I put down the papers, bowed to the squire, cast one brief glance at his sneering triumphant face, and departed from the room.

I sought my mother's apartments and flinging

myself upon a couch, I endeavoured to think. For myself and the position and estates I cared not—that part of my soul which did not belong to Cynthia was Jacobite. If I had not been born in lawful wedlock, it was by a cruel accident that it was so. If I now inherited no escutcheon, if I were no longer of good family, I could at least claim to be a gentleman, by education and by knowledge of arms. But Cynthia! Even if, as I believed, her constancy would be sacred, how could I now marry her with her fortune—I, without name, without inheritance. Fortune I could spare, but not Cynthia—and Cynthia seemed lost.

I could not believe that a catastrophe so peculiar, so unforeseen, could have befallen me. My very reason seemed to reel at the blow; I could not realize it. I repeated to myself "It is not true—it cannot be true." It seemed a combination of events so unexpected

so terribly disastrous, that I felt powerless how to act, or even how to think.

My mother's maid approached me.

"Her ladyship would speak with you," she said.

I entered my mother's bedroom; she was standing in the middle of it alone, looking very pale, but sad and calm.

"It is true, Nevill," she said, quietly; "this is what I have feared secretly for many, many years. My life was never a very sweet one, but the haunting dread of this disgrace has, more than all else, rendered my existence a wretched one. For myself what does it matter? What does anything matter? I am an old and dying woman: but to see you, my handsome, good, and best of sons, disinherited, disgraced, and robbed of everything, is very bitter."

My mother went on to explain that Gerard Ravensthorpe's father had first (soon after my

birth) excited her fears. Gerard's father, Bernard Ravensthorpe, vowed he had seen the first Madam Ravensthorpe at Marseilles. He died suddenly, but he left papers explaining the matter to his son; because if I were proved illegitimate then Gerard would be next of kin and heir at law.

It appeared that the squire had given Gerard money to travel and to hunt up the matter. My mother had learnt that this was his motive in travelling in France and in Italy. At first he was unsuccessful; and then my mother had hoped nothing would be discovered, especially as time passed and he never returned; but now he had arrived with the legal proof necessary to establish his claim, and I was disinherited. The worst had happened. I was surprised to see with what courage and fortitude my mother bore this blow; the more so when I recalled how the mere chance of such an evil had nearly killed

her a year before. But what I thought of most was how these tidings would affect my position with Giles Orme and with Cynthia.

"If only you had been married before it was known; your wife's fortune would have been ample, and she is so truly devoted to you that she would not have regretted it," cried my mother.

"No, mother. If I am born to poverty and disgrace, I am thankful that sweet being has not linked herself to my misfortunes."

CHAPTER XIII.

ARRESTED.

I mounted my horse and galloped over to Buckland Manor. When I arrived Mistress Orme received me in the Cedar parlour. How well I remember that interview, for it was fated we should not see each other again for many years. I could have staked my life upon the fact that Cynthia would be as faithful in adversity as in prosperity. I recal her appearance at that, our last meeting. Her soft brown hair was drawn smoothly over a roll, her gown of figured cambric was short and disclosed her small feet in high-heeled

shoes, her cap was ornamented with ribbons, and she wore a bunch of keys at her waist. It was thus attired I remember Mistress Patty in all the many sad scenes which followed our terrible parting.

Nothing could exceed her delicate kindness of manner, but I learnt that Gerard had already formally proposed for her hand with the squire's sanction, and that Giles Orme had accepted him as a suitor for his daughter.

"But I have told my father," she said, "that love is too sacred a thing to be transferred from one suitor to another in this fashion. I told him that I was vowed to you and that yours only could I be. If you had lost your inherited position I would wait until you had made a higher one by your talents and your courage."

"Madam," I answered, "I expected this high-souled conduct from you who are truth and honour itself."

Mr. Giles Orme then entered the room.

"Excuse me," said he, "for thus interrupting your interview with my daughter. Sir, that by unfortunate circumstances you have lost your wealth and rank is no fault of yours, and to a generous mind would it make you an object of pity, and on my soul, sir, I do pity you! It is not on this ground that I must consider your engagement with Mistress Orme at an end, but I am credibly informed by your cousin, who is now heir of Ravensthorpe, that you are a Rebel, and that you are engaged in treasonable correspondence with France. Know, sir, that I am a Whig, a loyal subject of King George, and therefore I must consider your engagement to my daughter at an end, therefore I have given orders to my servants, from this day, to forbid you my house."

The Mistress Patty Orme stood by, pale but collected.

"My sweet life," he said, turning to his

daughter, "you must not defend him We have been grossly and lamentably deceived in Mr. Nevill Ravensthorpe's real character. He is a dangerous and seditious malcontent, and will end in the gallows. I am your obedient servant, sir," said the old man, bowing to me, "and believe me sufficiently your well-wisher to advise you to leave the kingdom at once, because your treasonable practices are discovered, and will meet with their just punishment."

"Father!" cried Mistress Patty, almost frantic with terror, and deadly pale, "has he been denounced? This must be Gerard's work! He has informed against him!"

"Get to London at once, sir, and thence to France. I will tell them to bring round your horse. Foolish lad to meddle with treason."

"If it is true that I am in danger of arrest, Cynthia, madam, are you in no danger?"

"Think not of me, but only of yourself,"

was my lady's answer. "Fly at once! If they discover the arms at Upland Tower, Nevill, you are undone!" She became a little calmer, and she gave me the address of the Bull and Mouth Tavern, in Aldersgate Street, where she promised to communicate with me under the feigned name of Diggory Hogben. She then promised, most faithfully, to rejoin me either in London or Paris; and she begged me to start for town without a minute's delay.

We had even time, in those few happy minutes, to make plans for the future. We settled we would be married in Paris, and afterwards travel in France and Italy. As the brilliant prospect dawned upon me, I felt that Fate had more than made amends for the heavy blow she had struck me that morning, when I had found myself nameless and disinherited. We embraced each other over and over again, and I at length tore myself, heart-broken, away.

I was riding carelessly through the hamlet of Buckland New Cross. At the door of the Blue Boar Inn I saw some half-dozen red-coated troopers, lounging and smoking their pipes, with their arms piled. Directly they observed me, the sergeant in command gave the word. They unpiled arms, mounted their horses, and drew up across the road. The sergeant came up to me, advancing his halberd, and said, "I arrest you in the King's name, High Treason; here is my warrant."

The evening was somewhat advanced, and the sergeant agreed to let me remain at my own house, of Uplands, for the night. He informed me soldiers were already in possession of it, with a warrant to search for arms, said to be hidden there, and I knew that the most damning proof of my guilt would be the munitions of war, if they were found to be hidden in my cellar.

Among the villagers assembled at the Blue

Boar Inn I saw Diggory Hogben, who, with frightened face, watched my arrest. I beckoned to him to come to me, and, on a leaf of my note-book, wrote a line in pencil warning Cynthia of what had befallen me; knowing that at Upland Tower there were papers I had most incautiously kept, and which inculpated her and half the county.

By the leniency of the sergeant I was permitted to despatch Hogben, and then we turned towards my house.

While I was writing this note I perceived that two gentlemen were watching me from the window of the upper story of the inn: one of these was Gerard Ravensthorpe, the other Joddrell. The former bowed mockingly to me, and I could see his pale countenance bore an expression of fiendish pleasure and sneering triumph. I had now little doubt from what quarter the sudden blow of my arrest had come. Ah, honour has little chance in this

world against plotting craft. Gerard had taken all the steps for my defeat, while I, poor simpleton! had only been thinking of calling him out.

The rooks were cawing in the old trees of my avenue; and the sun was setting as I reached Uplands. I never loved that ancient house so well as at that minute when I was to leave it so soon for ever.

The consternation of my servants was not to be described when they saw me and my red-coated protectors arrive; my butler, Thomas Green, burst into tears, the footmen were distracted, the servant-wenches mostly screamed or fainted, and my dogs barked furiously, while old Hogben and some men working in a field shook their pitchforks at the intruders in impotent anger.

I was told that I might ride up to London at a foot's pace guarded by soldiers, and that I might put together a certain amount of

baggage, which could accompany us upon a pack-horse. I was escorted by the sergeant to my bedchamber. He observed that the mullions of the windows left no space for a man's body to pass between.

I asked if I might be permitted to write to my father and others. I was told I might write what I wished, and if it pleased the sergeant after he had read it, it should be dispatched, otherwise it would be destroyed. I pictured to myself a love-letter to my dear Cynthia submitted to the scrutiny of this boor; or the tender words with which I should break this misfortune to my dear mother being scanned by this illiterate rascal, therefore I put off my idea of writing.

The sergeant, bidding me good night, left me, after placing a sentry outside the door—which he locked, and put the key in his pocket. Another soldier paced up and down in front of the house under my window. I

was left to that state of solitude and reflection which was to form so great a part of my life, and which is the normal existence of a prisoner.

I was three-and-twenty, I should never see my lady again, and—judging from the vindictiveness with which Law had lately been treated—my immediate future was the ignominy of the gallows. Death was no king of terrors to me, even with the ghastly surroundings which had accompanied Law's end. I pictured that Cynthia would again occupy her place in the court, and that I might perish with those same words Law had spoken, "It is sweet to die for one's country."

I paced up and down my room. If I had only liberty—that liberty enjoyed by the poorest hind on my land—had I been free but for one quarter of an hour,—sooner than meet their irony of justice, their court, their

bloody execution, I would lay a slow match to those hundred-weights of gunpowder lying in my cellar, and send myself, Hanoverian troopers, sergeants, one and all, into eternity, and thus I should rob my enemies of their devilish triumph over me.

The night was dark as pitch, and the rain now pattered against the casements, while the wind howled dismally amongst the turrets, angles, bay-windows, and tall chimneys of the old house. It was precisely the sort of night to favour my escape, but here was I, in a situation which seemed hopeless. Then I bethought me, and I examined the window again. The sergeant had compared the dimensions of the spaces between the mullions with his own burly figure rather than with my slim one. Where my head could go my body could follow. With my diamond ring I could cut the little panes, and I might perchance be free; but the steady tread of the

sentry beneath the window showed that means of escape was impossible.

I sat with my head resting on my hands, and above the tempest I heard a heavy dull hammering sound, as if carpentering were going on in my house. This was soon followed by noisy bursts of merriment, and loud rough laughter. I concluded King George's soldiers were drinking His Majesty's health with my beer. I feared also they were opening those cases of arms, which I knew would place me beyond the pale of Hanoverian mercy.

I heard voices speaking in low whispers at my door long after midnight. I got up and listened. The door opened suddenly, and my old butler and Diggory Hogben entered.

"The redcoats are dead drunk—or drinking —your honour has not a minute to lose. Your horse stands saddled in the stable-yard."

I required no second invitation. I stumbled over the recumbent form of the sentry, un-

conscious from drinking, but who muttered an oath upon my disturbing him.

I reached the outer air, the wind and rain blew cold in my face.

"Diggory," said I, "you have ever been a good friend to me. Will you do me one more service?"

"I would live and die for your honour," said he.

"You must get my serving-men and maids out of the Tower, and even get those drunken Hanoverian wretches away if you can, before I leave. I must blow up this house before I go."

"Better leave at once, your honour," cried Diggory, "you will be discovered," but I was not to be persuaded by these remonstrances. Blowing up the Tower would hide all trace of my guilt, destroy all that compromising correspondence, and do more good to various members of our party than I could calculate.

Upland Tower having in part been built five hundred years before, and said to be of Norman origin, had, like most other ancient houses, a labyrinth of vaults and passages below ground, and these, in modern times, had been used as cellars.

These subterranean hiding-places were, I was well aware, absolutely crammed with cases of sabres, muskets, pistols, ammunition, and, lastly, of gunpowder sufficient to provide a small army.

Through the buttery-hatch I gained the cellars without being observed. The Hanoverians assisted me greatly, for they had forced open several powder-barrels, and thrown their contents all over the floor. I carefully placed a slow match, lighted it from a candle, and then with all speed hurried above ground.

"There is not one minute to lose, Diggory,"

cried I; "pull the women out of their beds, warn the sergeant if you can, take those topers out of doors, for in ten minutes there will be hardly a vestige of my manor-house left, and I would save what lives I can."

I reflected, rather bitterly, that this small arsenal was the property of Charles Edward. It had been collected, at how great an expense, and also with how much hope? Now both our pains and our money would be lost to the Cause. I have been much blamed for this act, but were I placed in the same position I would do it again. If it were a reckless sacrifice of human life, Heaven knows I received severe punishment enough for it. I admit it was a desperate act of retaliation; still, I hoped to remove, and did remove all compromising traces of arms and of papers, which I had most incautiously kept, and which, if discovered, would have brought

many Jacobites to the gallows, besides myself.

I grasped Diggory's hand, mounted my horse, and bade him farewell.

Three of my household, including my groom, escaped with me through the wood; we had barely time to reach some high ground which overlooked the house, we were much less than a quarter of a mile away, when below us, with a deafening noise, a clear sheet of light and fire rushed straight up to the heavens. This told me that the magazine had exploded, and that my house was in ruins.

I felt strangely glad and exultant. I had not died like a rat in a hole, without gaining some revenge upon my blood-thirsty enemies, and upon the all-powerful and detested Hanoverians.

To mortal man, revenge is sweet, and I thought of Gerard Ravensthorpe and Jod-

drell's triumphant faces as they watched me taken away, a prisoner, from the hamlet of Buckland New Cross. I had at least wiped out some old scores.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FUGITIVE.

I HAD determined to make for London, where I trusted that I should find some Alsatia of refuge. But I did not take the direct road by Moreton-in-the-Marsh to Oxford. I turned my horse's head to the old Roman road that ran straight across the wolds to Bourton-on-the Water. What a ride that was!

Again the rain-clouds had gathered over. In the mists and drenching rain the upland wolds were black, but the narrow old road dimly showed its grey track. On I galloped in a whirlwind of conflicting passions, to

which the howling gusts and sharp rain afforded a most apt accompaniment. I turned in my saddle and looked back; the sky was red with a distant conflagration. I suspected that Upland Tower was blazing. I rode quietly into the quaint village of Bourton, and rested for a while on the bridge over its little river, into which the rain pattered furiously.

Not a creature seemed stiring in the village. Continuing my course, I passed on till I reached the valley of the Thames, rode through Abingdon, and finally drew rein at Henley The clouds had passed, and the enchanting sunshine of a bright morning after the storm had dried my drenched apparel, and made the world seem hopeful.

At Henley I halted at one of the best inns, and ordered my tired horse to be taken to the stables. Mine host looked at me as if he entertained some suspicion that I was a knight

of the road; for my general appearance showed distinct signs of a hard ride in the heavy downpour. But I quieted his suspicions by remarking that I had been compelled to start early in the rain, in order to reach London in time for an appointment.

I refreshed myself after my wild night—not daring to think upon persons and events—with a good breakfast of brawn, and a big pike from forth the Thames. I drank a flask of mine host's best claret; and, deeming myself safe from pursuit here, I passed the morning in meditation.

In money I owned but a few crowns. However, I possessed a diamond ring, and, under a light riding-coat I was wearing, my best velvet gold-embroidered suit; and I had heavy gold buckles to my shoes, having ridden in gaiters. So with a valuable watch, and a French enamelled snuff-box, set with small diamonds, I had enough wealth upon

my person to obviate the dread of immediate want. I had also a little gold-framed miniature of Cynthia, but with that I did not intend to part.

I determined to sell my valuables in London, exchange my rich suit for a plain one, adopt a brown bob-wig to disguise me, and then take the first ship which I could procure for France.

I was familiar with the country between Ravensthorpe and London, and I decided to ride on to Windsor in the afternoon, and from thence walk to London, leaving my horse in payment of my bill, as my slender stock of money would be probably nearly exhausted.

I entered Windsor towards evening. As I contemplated the noble towers and walls of the castle, palace and fortress, since William the Norman made it his abode, it seemed to me desecrated by the Hanoverian who now

occasionally inhabited it. I inned at the best house, the Star and Garter, and at an early hour I fell asleep in the enchanting luxury of a bed, after a night and great part of a day spent in the saddle. Next morning, after a hearty breakfast, I took a last look at the royal fortress, and walked on towards Brentford; leaving, with sincere regret, my noble steed to be bail for me at mine inn. Again the rain-clouds had come over. I walked on, dejected and humiliated, now that I was tramping in the mud instead of bounding along upon a thoroughbred horse. I could not help cowering with shame as the gilded coach and six of my lord, or stage-waggon, or horseman passed me. My gold-laced hat and fine overcoat gave me an appearance above the usual class compelled to go afoot, and I was stared at disagreeably by wayfarers of all classes. However, the rain and mud speedily combined to render me sufficiently

draggle-tailed to avoid notice. As I continued on the highway across Hounslow Heath the evil reputation of the place occured to me in conjunction with my valuables. I had, however, taken the precaution to transfer my pistols from the holsters to my pockets, so that I was well armed. But I need have felt no apprehension. If I had met an highwayman he would never have supposed that the bemired wretch, with a hedge-stake in his hand, pressing on through the mud, had a diamond-adorned snuff-box in his pocket.

I had intended to walk on to London, but the heavy showers and gusts which I had encountered across Hounslow Heath, combined with the unaccustomed exercise of walking, had so wearied me, that, when I reached Brentford, I determined to put up at some small hostelry, where the crown which was left me would be sufficient for my entertainment for the night.

The burly host of a small inn looked at me suspiciously when he saw that beneath the mud which plastered me, for I had endured many a splash from passing coach or horseman, I had fine apparel; so I told him that my horse had fallen lame at Windsor, and that I had only enough money to walk on to London, where I had an appointment. I then showed him my crown-piece, and drank to his health in a tankard of ale, which I demanded, and he forthwith became exceedingly civil. After an excellent supper I managed to forget my troubles before a bright fire, in company with some yokels and a groom or two, who looked in to take a mug of ale and a pipe. The novelty of the situation rather amused me, and I applauded some rustic ditties with which two of them favoured the company; and I slept soundly in a clean though coarse bed.

My score still left the greater part of my

crown to me, and I walked on gaily to London the next morning in bright sunshine, and amidst a prodigious number of chariots, coaches, stage-coaches, and waggons, horsemen, and occasional horsewomen, and other dames on pillions behind their cavaliers.

As the immensity of the population in approaching London became clearly impressed upon my comprehension; and, as I observed their elaboration in dress, and their carelessness in demeanour, I saw the vanity of the Jacobite dreams, which had once seemed so promising; because it was well known that, though the country gentleman were all for the White Cockade, London, great and powerful, was altogether Whig. On reaching town also, it forcibly occurred to me that I might encounter some emissary despatched in haste from Gloucestershire to retake me. Stepping aside from the little hamlet of Turnham Green I tied up my face with my handkerchief as

if I had been hurt thereon, and slouching my hat at the same time; but I still had to endure the annoyance of being stared at. Passing through the little town of Kensington, and past the avenues of the red-brick Hanoverian palace of Kensington, I gazed with delight over the palings of Hyde Park at an occasional herd of deer, reminding me of the inhabitants of the glades of Ravensthorpe; my mother, Cynthia, the joys of home, then came to my recollection with irresistible force, and the pangs of profound regret at leaving them brought tears into my eyes.

At length I found myself in the familiar district of St. James's, and, I now took the precaution to leave Piccadilly, and plunge, as soon as possible, into the narrow streets leading towards Soho Square. Turning into an ale-house I called for a tankard, and took, with a feeling of intense luxury and freedom,

my seat upon a coarse bench, where I proceeded to reflect.

Here I was in London, and, so far, safe. What were to be my plans?

I knew enough about the town not to be caught in the hands of any of its sharpers or bullies; and I knew where I should be likely to find a Jew to exchange my remains of former consequence for some money and plain attire.

It was a desperate effort which brought me within a Jew dealer's in second-hand finery of all sorts. And of course he effected with me about the very best bargain which he ever made in his life. He quite humiliated me by enlarging on the smallness of the diamonds which garnished my snuff-box. He pronounced my buckles to be silver-gilt, and affirmed that the lace on my coat was tarnished. However, I procured a few gold

pieces and some silver crowns, with a pinchbeck watch in place of my golden one. I also obtained a suit of brown homespun instead of my velvet, with copper buckles, and a brown wig, of unfashionable dimensions, to come well over my forehead and ears. He smiled upon me with the extremest cordiality as I emerged, feeling utterly ashamed and disgusted.

But when I had taken a lodging in an obscure street, paying the landlady in advance, as I had only the very small valise I had bought of the Jew, by way of baggage, I recovered my spirits.

CHAPTER XV.

IN LONDON.

For a week I led a strange life; I wandered about the meaner streets, scarcely able to realize my situation. The beauty and charms of Cynthia, the sweet face of my mother, and all the happy memories of Buckland Manor, were continually present, with a sense of constant and painful regret; still I had hope; for, as I had written, I knew I should (as we had arranged) have news from my lady. The bustle of the streets also, the articles in the shop windows, somewhat distracted my atten-

tion, and prevented melancholy from preying upon my mind. The concern, which chiefly tortured me, was the consideration of the suffering they would endure in their ignorance of my fate.

That brief spell of imprisonment, when, for a moment, escape seemed hopeless, had entered into my soul. The risk of capture, and perhaps, at the best, imprisonment in the Tower during his Hanoverian Majesty's pleasure, was vividly present to my mind; therefore I thanked God I was free and I hoped to remain so.

I looked into Soho Square and thought of the days when I went in a coach to the public breakfasts and promenades of Ranelagh, or in a chair to the boxes of Covent Garden. I remembered delightful excursions in gilded barges on the river, to the music of hautboys and French horns. Then there were expeditions to Ludgate Hill or the New Exchange, to

tumble over the mercers' wares; or to view some Indian or China trifle. How different my London of the past to the present!

One day I took up *The Evening Post* in an obscure chocolate-house, and read an advertisement for my own apprehension. But as I was described in velvet and lace, and as wearing my own hair, my first natural consternation did not long distress me.

I had considerable difficulty in resisting the pleasures of the town, and, one day reading a placard which informed the nobility and gentry that the fields on the way to Marylebone Gardens were well patrolled at night to avert all danger from footpads, I felt somewhat disposed to adopt that profession myself, or, better still, to take to the road. Ah! if I had only had my dear old mare in my possession, I am not sure whether the temptation would not have been too strong, because my slender stock of coin was rapidly ebbing.

But the end of my London life speedily came. One day I had walked towards Islington and I was tempted to enter the Sadler's Wells garden and theatre.

Here was music and promenading, and eating and drinking in arbours. The fat citizens—as they certainly mostly were—and their wives and pretty daughters, and smart prentices, were diverting to contemplate, and I forgot my troubles and my Cynthia for a time. Finding that a burletta was to be performed which promised amusement, with disregard of my altered condition in life I marched into the best seats, into the boxes. Here half-a-crown was demanded for admission, and for three shillings, a pint of port, lisbon, or mountain wine, was given in addition. I called for a pint of Lisbon, and was proceeding to enjoy myself when I was suddenly humiliated by observing that a stout, showily-dressed woman, and two plump, gaily-dressed girls,

were regarding me with looks of considerable disfavour. They were staring at my unfashionable wig, my suit of brown homespun, and my copper buckles; and, moreover, instead of an amber-headed cane, I had only a stout oaken stick.

"What himpudence!" the stout lady said, talking apparently at me, though not actually addressing me, "for a fellow like that to hintrude into the best box seats and horder his wine, as if beer or gin wasn't good enough for the likes of 'im."

The daughters looked at me, scornfully raising their already somewhat elevated noses, and one who was next to me moved her big brocaded skirts a little, so that they might not come in contact with my plebeian apparel. A smart young citizen was escorting them, who, at first sight, might have been taken for a gentleman. They all looked at him as if for protection. He was in light blue with

silver lace, and he had a sword by his side. And here was evidently the opportunity of displaying his pretensions and winning the approbation of the fair. The curtain had not yet risen. The theatre was rapidly filling, and there were no places for these four to sit together, in a good position, except in the seats adjoining mine. As they evidently thought that I, in my homespun, might be mistaken for one in their company, they were disgusted at my presence. The young man crossed to me with a swagger and said:—

"Hexcuse me, sir, but these are the dress boxes, and I think you must have got in 'ere by mistake, instead of the pit or gallery."

"Confound your impudence!" I replied; "but for the creating a disturbance in the theatre, I would throw you over the boxes into the pit instead of going thither myself."

"Would you hindeed? I'd like to see you do it," said the youth, feeling that his credit

was now at stake, and that the ladies would utterly despise him if he didn't show fight; and, forgetting that he had an unaccustomed sword at his side, he tucked up his sleeves and prepared for fisticuffs.

I had lost my temper entirely, and being very capable of using my fists, as well as my hand and wrist for small sword, I was about to join issue. But one of the girls cried out "Don't take to your vulgar fistisses 'Enry; draw your sword, and run him through the body."

Thus admonished, he rather falteringly drew the weapon, and made as though he would have lunged at me, whereupon I crossed it with my stick, with a slight feint, which he attempted to parry awkwardly, and then by a well-known fencing trick I sent his sword whirling out of his hand into the pit, where it luckily lighted on the very bushy wig of a stout citizen, and did no harm to anybody. Of course a crowd pressed towards

us. The box-keepers of the theatre hurried up, and, after a deal of expostulation and excited complaints on the part of the fair citizens, I was hustled away by about a dozen servants of the theatre and others, and was ordered to leave the gardens, under pain of being taken to the round-house, and brought before the magistrate the next morning.

I stalked proudly out of the gardens, hot, angry, and excited, disposed to attack the whole force of the place, but my stick had been wrested out of my hand. My coat was torn, and, in the confusion, my watch and purse with the remnant of my money had gone.

I demanded to see the proprietor, and told him what had occurred, and how scurvily I had been treated; and I will do him the justice to say that he sympathised with me, returned the half-crown which I had paid for the box seat, ordered a search to be made for my

purse and pinchbeck watch without avail, —some pickpocket having apparently secured them—and I left the gardens without property beyond the half-crown. As I owed for some days lodging I dared not return for the few articles there belonging to me. I, erstwhile heir to Ravensthorpe, betrothed to a beautiful and wealthy damsel, was an outcast, in a ragged coat, with but one solitary coin in my pocket.

Still, my spirits retained their buoyancy. I was consoled by reflecting that I was at all events free, and not in prison as a Jacobite. I triumphed in having, I believed, obliterated all trace of "my seditious practices" as they styled it, and this, not for myself only, but for many others who might have suffered in the Cause; and then Cynthia loved me, and with her long experience of the shifts and straits of conspirators and outlaws I doubted not that she would quickly communicate with me

at the Bull and Mouth Inn in Aldersgate. I determined to stroll towards Smithfield and the City, and found the air of the fields was fresh and agreeable.

Before I reached the streets I was attracted by the old gateway, the remnant of the convent of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John. I was intending to make to Tower Hill, but I turned aside distracted from my melancholy, and my vague bitter feelings, by the aspect of the old gate. Its architecture recalled to my mind Ravensthorpe, and its sweet and sad memories. I scarcely dared to think of my mother, and her anguish at my unknown fate.

Suddenly I came upon a small military party, consisting of a serjeant, a drummer, and a piper. My heart sank within me; here were soldiers who might be searching for me. I soon saw however, from the gay ribbons which floated from his hat, that the sergeant was recruiting. The piper and drummer struck

up the Grenadiers' March, and the party marched on, through the old Tudor gateway to Clerkenwell Green which lay beyond. Here a small crowd of idle young fellows had been collected by the drum and fife.

The sergeant, who was a sprightly-looking soldier, with a decided touch of the Irish brogue in his voice, proceeded to address them, or I may say us, for I had followed, though I still scowled at the Hanoverian soldiery.

"If any 'prentices have severe masters," said the sergeant, "if any children have undutiful parents, if any servants have too little wages, or any husband too much wife, let them repair to the noble Sergeant Flynn at the sign of the Bull and Mouth in Aldersgate Street, and they shall receive present relief and entertainment. Gentlemen, I don't beat my drums here to ensnare any man, for you must know, gentlemen, that I am a man

of honour,—and it's no ordinary service that I would enlist ye for,—I'm asking ye to enlist in the gallant Colonel Adlercron's regiment, under orders for the East Indies, where the silver pagodas grow upon trees, and diamonds and pearls are just to be had for the picking up, as ye walk about the streets."

I was here startled by the deep harsh roar of many voices, the sound of a crowd hooting in anger. The cause of their wrath soon appeared: first a few gay dragoons trotted past me, then quickly followed a chariot drawn by four horses, then more dragoons guarding the equipage behind. But what most surprised me, and made my very heart stop beating with terror, was to recognise one of the Buckland Manor House coaches with the Orme arms on it panels. Who could be in it? Could they have taken Cynthia? When I had recovered sufficient calmness to

speak, I asked a bystander if he had seen who was in the carriage.

"Why, no, sir. 'Tis a rebel they are taking to the Tower, and, for my part, I hope they will hang the rascal."

END OF VOL. I.

00076373

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018